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INCIDENTS

IN THE

LIFE OF A PASTOR.

BY

17 WILLIAM WISNER, D.D.



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## DEDICATION.

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THOSE CONGREGATIONS OVER WHICH  
I HAVE PRESIDED AS PASTOR.

BELoved FRIENDS :

As this little volume is made up of the incidents in a life which has been worn out in efforts to promote your temporal and eternal well-being, I have thought it should be inscribed to you, as a token of a pastor's love, and a memento of the condescending grace of God, which accompanied his labors among you. Permit me to bespeak for it an interest in your prayers, that the great Head of the Church would make it an instrument of good to your children, and to the souls of all into whose hands it may fall, after the hand of the writer shall be mouldering in the grave.

Your Friend and former Pastor,

WILLIAM WISNER.

ITHICA, *May 1st*, 1851.



## P R E F A C E .

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THE Incidents published in this little volume are all of them facts, and not fiction. As they extend over a period of more than thirty years, and the writer has had nothing but the brief entries in his diary to assist his memory, it will not be expected that the precise language used on the occasions referred to could be recollected. The substance of each conversation has been scrupulously retained, and all the circumstances put down which seemed necessary to lay open to the reader the operations of the human mind on the subject of personal religion, point out the obstacles which keep awakened sinners away from Christ, and show the wonderful condescension and grace of God in the work of man's salvation.

If this brief abstract of the writer's experience and observation, in his intercourse with the different

classes of individuals, through the course of his ministry, should assist or encourage his younger brethren, in their labors of love with their dying fellow men, or should aid any awakened sinners in finding their way to Christ, his object in this publication will be obtained, and the ardent desire of his heart, and his prayer to God answered.



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## INCIDENTS IN A PASTOR'S LIFE.

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### THE INFIDEL WITHOUT A RESTING PLACE.

WALKING one day in the village where I was laboring, I met a man who I knew openly avowed himself an infidel. After the usual salutations, I said to him, "Well, Mr. B., what is the condition of your soul this morning?"

His answer was, "O, I am an infidel."

"I know that, Mr. B., but as a man of reflection, who understands what infidelity is, you will not pretend to me that you know the Bible is not the word of God." After a few moments reflection, he replied, "I acknowledge that I do not know that it is not, but I do not believe it is." "Well, Mr. B., if the Bible should not be the word of God, can you be sure that there will not be just such a state of retribution beyond the grave as the Bible describes?"

"No, I am sure of nothing beyond the grave, but I do not believe there will be any retribution."

"Then, Mr. B., your reason compels you to admit, that you cannot know, but living and dying as you are, you will go to hell; and be as miserable there to all eternity, as the Saviour represented the rich man to be."

"It is true, I can be certain of nothing beyond the grave, whether I shall exist at all there, or if I do what will be my condition, is a mere matter of conjecture."

"Keep this in mind, Mr. B., when you lie down and when you rise up, that you do not know but you shall go to hell when you die, and if you can rest with the possibility of such a dreadful end your mind is differently constituted from mine."

We parted, and he went about his business, but, as I afterwards learned, never enjoyed any peace until he indulged a hope in Christ.

In a few weeks he united with the Baptist church.

Infidels do not reflect how baseless their scheme is. It keeps them from the consolations of a hope of a blessed immortality, and

gives them nothing in return. Surely their rock is not like our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.

---

#### THE SICK DOCTOR AND THE 10<sup>TH</sup> OF ROMANS.

IN visiting among my people one morning, a lady informed me that a physician in the village, with whom I had some acquaintance, was confined to his room by a severe cold, and his friends had some apprehensions that it might result in his death.

I immediately went to his room to see him, and found him on his bed. He assured me that he had no apprehensions of any other serious effects from his present indisposition, than confinement from his business for a few weeks. He said he was taken with an inflammation of the lungs, and had used such thorough means to reduce it, that it had left him very weak, but he thought he should soon recover.

After conversing with him upon the general subject of religion, I requested him to take the

tenth chapter of Romans, and study it as he would a medical book, and give me his opinion of its meaning when I called again.

The second time I called, as soon as I was seated, he said to me, "I cannot understand that chapter you gave me to study, when you were here last."

"What part of it, doctor, don't you understand?"

"That part that says, 'If we will confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with our heart, that God hath raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved.'"

"Why, my dear sir, there is no hidden meaning to that passage; it tells us a simple truth, and must be understood just like any other plain declaration."

"What then is it to believe with the heart?"

This I illustrated by telling him that if his wife was in New York, and a man of established reputation should come from that city, and inform him that she lay at the point of death, he would be immediately convinced of the truth of the message, while his heart would wish that it was not so; but if a subsequent messenger should arrive and inform him that



his wife had passed the crisis in her disease, and was out of danger, the feelings of his heart would sympathize with his intellectual convictions, or in other words, he would believe with the heart and the understanding.

On hearing this illustration, he lay for a short time absorbed in thought, and then inquired with earnestness, "Is this all!"

I told him this was my view of the meaning of a belief of the heart, and referred him to the passage in Acts, where, on the day of Pentecost, as many as gladly received the word were baptized and added to the Church.

He replied, "If this is so, then salvation is much easier to attain than I have ever supposed."

I told him it was indeed so, and that sinners often rejected it on that account. They were looking for something mysterious and difficult, and when they were told that they had only to believe with the heart, like the Assyrian leper, they would go away disappointed, and often displeased.

The next time I called to see him, I found him much more unwell, but full of joy and peace. He seemed to believe with the heart,

that God had raised His son Jesus Christ from the dead, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. He continued to sink rapidly under his disease, and in a few weeks closed his earthly career, rejoicing in the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

How often do sinners, when convinced of their lost condition, instead of submitting themselves to the righteousness of God, go about to establish a righteousness of their own. They must do something to make themselves better, before they come to the Saviour; and in this way often grieve the Holy Spirit away from them, and lose their serious impressions, and die in their sins.

## INFIDELITY DREADFUL TO THE AWAKENED SINNER.

In 1826, when God was pouring out his Spirit on my congregation, there was living among us a young man of an active and enterprising mind, who, as he subsequently informed me, to get rid of the restraint imposed by the self-denying doctrines of the gospel, had tried to become a Universalist, but perceiving that the Bible was directly opposed to his new sentiments, had rejected the unaccommodating book, and became an infidel.

Though he had cast off the restraints imposed on the mind by a belief in the Christian system, and was wholly neglecting the institutions of the gospel, yet the reflex influence of religion upon the amiable temper of his mind, enabled him to retain, to a considerable extent, that outward morality, which forms one of the distinct folds of her accustomed drapery.

Until the revival had been in progress nearly a month, and more than one hundred were rejoicing in hope, this young man kept himself aloof from what he considered a foolish and a

needless excitement. But on the 6th of December he was induced, by a sense of politeness, to accompany a lady, with whom he boarded, to an evening lecture.

He went to this meeting, however, with a full determination to keep his mind engrossed with worldly thoughts, and succeeded so well that on his return home he had no distinct recollection of any one truth that had been advanced.

After supper, the lady of the house, and a pious young woman who resided in the family, left the young man in the parlor, and retired to their own rooms in a distant part of the house, to have a season of prayer for the thoughtless boarder. While they were on their knees, pleading in a low tone of voice for him at the throne of grace, they were alarmed by a cry of anguish from the parlor. On repairing thither, they found the family Bible open upon the table, and the young man standing upon the floor with strong marks of agony upon his countenance. On seeing the ladies his pride rallied, and to the question, "What is the matter?" he was, as he afterwards told us, about to answer, "Nothing," but

before the words had passed his lips, his heaving bosom gave vent to another cry of anguish, and he exclaimed, "O, I am an infidel, pray for me," and fell prostrate on the floor.

Under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, he now saw clearly that his Universalism and infidelity were alike refuges of lies, under which he had taken shelter to screen himself from the reproaches of a guilty conscience; and he believed that an incensed God was driving him from them, not in mercy to him, but as a warning to those who might be tempted to adopt a similar course.

About 12 o'clock at night he requested that some of his companions of the legal profession, for he was a lawyer, might be sent for, that they, seeing his anguish, might escape the hopeless abyss into which he had fallen. At two in the morning I was called from my bed to visit him. Upon entering the room I found him upon his knees; not attempting to pray, but sustaining himself by a chair, and giving vent to the anguish of his lacerated bosom. I approached him and inquired the state of his mind, but only received the answer, "I am an infidel! I have denied my Saviour, and am

now given up of God to eat of the fruit of my own doing." His soul seemed sunk in despair, while the shiverings of a strange, unearthly horror, which ran through his frame, had so prostrated his muscular powers, that he was unable to stand without support. After giving him some instructions from the word of God, and praying for him, I left him under the care of some judicious friends and returned home. The next day was a thanksgiving through the State, and though it was a season of great gratitude to God among us, it was also a season of deep distress with many, and great anxiety with all. The church was filled with Christians, who were agonizing in prayer, and with awakened and convicted sinners, who felt that the pit was yawning at their feet.

In the evening there was a meeting of inquiry, at which there were some seventy or eighty persons, and among them was the despairing young lawyer, who came, supported by two friends. Here I again endeavored to lead him to Christ, but to every overture of mercy he would reply, "These provisions were once for me, but I have rejected them. I have



sinned away my day of grace. I am an infidel !”

In this state of mind he left the meeting, and continued to tremble under a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation from the presence of the Lord, until 11 o'clock that night, when his obdurate will was humbled by the Spirit of the Lord ; and the heart-rending groans of the convicted infidel were exchanged for the joyful song of the child of God.

The next morning he came into our prayer meeting, and with great tenderness of feeling, gave us an account of his conflict. He said that what kept him so long from peace, was a desire to compromise with the Almighty, instead of submitting himself unconditionally into His hands. There is no compromise, said he, in this matter. We must submit before God can have mercy.

His transition from the bitterness of a hopeless sinner, to joy and peace in believing, was sudden ; but his joy, instead of being like the morning cloud and the early dew, has been like the light which is shed upon the path of the just, shining more and more. He has been a

pillar in the church twenty-four years, and for more than fifteen a ruling elder.

If this case may be considered, as I think it may, a fair specimen of the effects of infidelity upon a mind enlightened by the spirit of God in this world, where there is room for repentance, what will be the condition of the infidel, when eternity shall disclose the unreasonable wickedness of such an attitude—when there will be no opportunity to escape from the wrath of an insulted Saviour. The freethinker seems to consider his scepticism a justification for all that he does amiss. As he resorted to it to get rid of the strictness of the law of God, he avails himself of the license allowed him, by his adopted creed, to indulge all his wicked propensities. When exhorted to attend to the means of grace, he is satisfied with the answer, 'I am an infidel.' When entreated to break off from his immoral habits, he gives us the same answer. And when we point him to the injury he is doing the rising generation, by withdrawing them from under the restraints of the gospel, he meets us with the same self-satisfying reply, "I am an infidel." But what consolation will his infidelity give him, when the light



of Eternity shall teach him, what the Holy Ghost taught this young man? Infidelity may indeed blind the eyes for a time, and enable the sinner to walk with a firmer step in the road to Hell, but it is a chosen delusion, which must pass away. If the spirit of God does not remove it in this world, it will be dispelled by the light of his countenance in the world to come, and then the poor self-blinded creature will realize those truths which made the knees of this young man to smite together.

It is easy for men, while immersed in the bustle of business, or running in the giddy round of fashionable amusements, or listening to the pleasant song, to forget God, and put far off the evil day. It is easy for them while sitting at a full board, and joining in the convivial circle, to silence the small voice of conscience by the recollection that they are infidels. But the bustle of business, and the giddy round of fashionable amusements, must be laid aside; the song of pleasure must pass away; the full board and the convivial circle must depart. Death's awful bereavements must break up the dearest relationships of life; the largest possessions must be reduced

to the limits of the narrow house ; and even the repose of the grave must be broken by the noise of the heavens and the earth passing away.

Then, impenitent sinner, what will you do ? When the clarion of the gospel shall be exchanged for the trumpet of the archangel, and the sceptre of mercy for the sword of justice ; when you shall stand upon a dissolving world, in the presence of a righteous God ; when the history of your life shall be unfolded, the book of God's law opened, and the offers of mercy rolled up and laid aside—will you be able to silence the reproaches of an awakened conscience, or still the throbbings of an aching heart, by exclaiming—" I AM AN INFIDEL ?"

## THE LAST TIME.

As I stood by the side of a dying young man, around whose bed the family had been collected by his request, for their morning devotions, he lifted up his eyes to his weeping father, who was about to kneel in prayer, and said, "It is the last time I shall ever unite in this service with this loved circle, with whom I have so often knelt in prayer." The household were deeply moved, and as they united with this loved one in the worship of God, for the last time in this world, they felt that it was something more than the forms of religion which called them to the throne of grace. From the father, whose head was beginning to be sprinkled with gray hairs, to the youngest brother, a boy of eight years, all were convulsed with weeping.

Here was a scene of absorbing interest. This family, through all their trials and seasons of distress, had been called to experience no bereavement. They had rejoiced together, and wept together, and prayed together; but

now they had arrived at that point in their history, when they could walk together no more. They had come to the entrance of the dark valley, and while one of their number was called to step down into it, the rest of the family were not permitted to accompany him. They had knelt for a parting blessing, to entreat the precious Saviour to walk with the loved one through the dark passage, and to sustain the survivors, who were ordained to labor a little longer in a world where sin and death were still permitted to reign. They had often contemplated, and talked, and prayed, about this hour, while they were all in health ; but to realize it, to have the individual who must go first designated, and ready to depart, to hear his own lips announce, that this was the last time they should ever unite with him in family devotion, called up a set of feelings altogether new. The parents had now done all that they ever could do for their dear boy, except to wipe the cold sweat of death from his well-developed forehead, close his intelligent blue eyes, which were still fixed affectionately upon them, prepare his body for the tomb, and carry it to its last resting place. No mistake in

his Christian education could now be corrected, no neglect in preparing him to stand at the judgment-seat could now be supplied, and no injury which might have accrued to his spirituality by the precepts or example of those whom God had appointed to train and discipline him for himself, could now be remedied. His earthly career was ended, his character was formed, and the image impressed on his undying soul by all the influences which had been brought to bear upon it, was about to receive the seal of eternal duration.

The brothers and sisters, too, as they knelt for the last time around his dying couch, could not but feel, that he would carry to the judgment-seat the effects of all the influences which they had exerted, and that he would be a witness for or against them there.

To the dying youth, too, this was a most solemn moment. His days were now numbered and finished, the sun which was then sending his golden beams over the eastern hills, would set upon his cold, dead body. The hour had arrived which must separate him from happiness and hope or introduce him into the joy of his Lord. What a moment ! The influence

of the conduct of a whole family resting upon the head of one of its dying members, and going with him into eternity.

Yes, reader, this was all true, for though the righteous God would not punish this young man for the sin of his parents, nor make him accountable for the sins of the brothers and sisters, yet the influence of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness, or of the holy or unholy example of this entire family, did help to form the character of this young man, and will have an important bearing upon his happiness or misery, when the great drama of human affairs shall have been wound up.

But more than this, dear reader, the last time must come to every individual, and to every family of the human race. We must every one of us lie down upon the bed of death, and know that our days are numbered and finished. Our friends, (if we are privileged to die among them,) must stand around our couch, and feel that it is the last time. Then, when the last adieu of the beloved ones around us is sounding in our dying ear, we shall feel that every event in our past life will have an important bearing upon the des-



tiny of our undying souls through all eternity. Are you ready, reader, for this hour? For this winding up of the great drama?

If you are a parent, are you ready to stand for the last time by the bed of a dying child, and know that he is just taking his departure to that world of woe or joy, for which your precepts and example have done more than all other causes to prepare him?

Brothers and sisters, are you ready for this last time? Are you prepared to stand by the death-bed of one of your own number, and while you wipe the big drops of sweat from his face, to feel that the influence of your example has contributed to fit him for glory and immortality, and eternal life, or for indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, forever.

And, finally, are each of you prepared to lie down upon your bed for the last time? are you ready to listen to the last prayer that will ever be offered for you, and to feel that there is nothing but the death struggle between your souls and the judgment-seat of the Holy God? Believe me, impenitent reader, that time is near at hand, and let not the cares of the world, nor the deceitfulness of riches, nor

the lusts of other things, keep you from contemplating it, and preparing for it. It is to prepare for this day that all your other days are given you, and if it should not find you ready, it would be well for you if you had never been born.

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#### RESTING ON THE PRAYER OF CHRISTIANS.

IN the time of a precious revival of religion in my congregation, at the close of an evening lecture, I gave notice that if there were any impenitent persons, who wished for personal conversation with the pastor, they might remain after the benediction, and that those Christians who wished might remain and have a season of prayer. As soon as the congregation had withdrawn, a woman came to me in great distress, and wished to have us pray for her. I asked her if she felt that she was a guilty, condemned sinner, and that Jesus Christ was just such a Saviour as she needed: she said she did. I inquired if she did not know that



He was willing to receive her, and forgive her sins, if she would unreservedly submit herself into His hands. She said that she did. I then asked her if she would give herself to Him? She replied that she wished to, but could not, and wanted to have Christians pray for her.

I thought, from her appearance and conversation, that I could discover a disposition to put the prayers of Christians in the place of the Saviour, and told her that we could not pray for her. That she knew her duty and was refusing to do it, and wished to have us treat her as a poor, unfortunate creature, who wished to be saved by Christ, but could not.

She entreated, with sobs and many tears, to be made a subject of prayer: said she had come several miles for that purpose, and hoped we would not deny her that privilege.

I told her she knew her Master's will, and had long refused to do it, that our prayers would not alter the terms of her salvation, and we would not interpose them between her and Christ, but she must either submit herself into His hands, and accept of the pardon which He offered, or go home rejecting Him.

On hearing this she seemed in an agony of

mind for a short time, but soon gave up her rebellion, and began to rejoice in the Saviour whom she had all her life long rejected, and went away thankful that she could find no resting place short of the blood of the cross.

I have no doubt, that if we had complied with her request, she would have gone home hoping that our prayers would be answered, and not unlikely have grieved the Holy Spirit, and lost all her concern about her salvation. Sinners, under awakening, desire something to rest on this side of Christ, and we should be exceedingly careful not to furnish them with any ground to feel that they are using means, which will induce God to have mercy on them.

## SUBMISSION AND JOY WITHOUT HOPE.

AMONG the prominent members of my congregation was the leading physician of the place. He was the son of a quaker, and though he had retained enough of the peculiarities of that sect, to be able to ward off the truths of God from his conscience, he had not enough of their commendable morality to keep him from becoming a notorious horse-racer and a gambler.

His wife was a superior woman. She was well educated, and had an independent mind, and mourned over his pernicious habits. Notwithstanding the influence of her husband, she was brought, by the grace of God, to indulge a hope in Christ, and presented herself to the session, and was approved and ordered to be received, with a number of others, on the next Sabbath.

On Saturday afternoon, she told her husband that she had been examined, and, if he had no objections, intended to make a public profession of religion. He said he had objec-

tions to her taking such a step. She told him to state them, and if she could feel that they would relieve her from her obligation to Christ she would defer uniting with the church until they could be removed. He replied that he was dissatisfied with our confession of faith. She then got the compendium to which the candidates were required to assent, and read it article by article, and when she had got through he told her to go on. She told him she was at the end, and had read all to which the candidates were required to give their assent. He said it could not be that she had read the whole of that confession, which I used on the admission of members. She assured him she had read every word, and requested him to examine it for himself. He left the room without saying a word, and she had no more conversation with him that evening. He was unhappy, but knew not why, and endeavored to avoid company.

Some time in the evening a man called to have him go a few miles out of town, to visit a sick woman. He sent the messenger on ahead, that he might ride alone, as he did not wish to converse with any one. While he was

riding through the woods, thinking about the character of Jehovah, as he had heard it preached in the sanctuary, and explained by his pastor in private conversation, all of a sudden the subject was presented to his mind in such a manner, that he began to be filled with delight in its contemplation. "Surely," said he to himself, "such a God ought to be loved, and his moral government submitted to and delighted in," and then he was filled with joy and peace. But soon it occurred to him, that he was the enemy of this God and might probably remain His enemy to all eternity, and be cast out from His presence. This made him unhappy. But then he thought it would be right in God to deal with him according to his sins; and then the glory of the divine perfections would fill his mind, and banish all thought of himself, and he would again be filled with joy and peace. In this way his mind alternated between joy, in view of the divine perfections, and a dread of remaining God's enemy, until he had prescribed for the sick woman and returned home.

He went to the church next morning with his wife, and saw her join herself to the Lord

in an everlasting covenant, and became so delighted with the plan of salvation, that he could scarcely think of himself at all, but did not have the least suspicion that his heart had been changed, until the middle of the week, when he began to hope that he had been born again. At the next communion season he, with thirteen other young converts, openly took the covenant of God upon himself, and became an active member of the church.

After a suitable trial, he was chosen and ordained a ruling elder, and for many years was one of my efficient helpers in bringing souls to Christ. He still lives, and is an elder in a Presbyterian church, though not in the place where he was brought to the knowledge of the Lord.

This case furnishes a beautiful illustration of the foundation of the Christian's hope. It does not precede, but follows his submission to God, and is founded upon his love for and trust in the Redeemer. We learn, too, from this man's experience, that the character and government of God should be kept prominently before the mind of the impenitent sinner, that he may understand the nature of the contro-



versy between himself and his Maker; and may have the elements of joy and peace in his soul, as soon as he is brought to give up that controversy. If the doctor had not been taught what that character and government was, he would neither have known the depths of his own depravity, nor have been filled with joy and peace in contemplating the divine perfections. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," but the sinner can never know this experimentally, until he is made acquainted with the character of the MOST HIGH, and with the principles of his administration. When these truths are distinctly kept before the mind, the HOLY SPIRIT, by carrying them home to the heart, convicts of sin, by letting the transgressor feel that he is the enemy of a holy and righteous God.

## IT IS BUT A MOMENT'S WORK.

IN a season of revival in 1830, I found in my meeting of inquiry an old man upwards of seventy, who had for more than forty years been trying to find rest for his soul in the works of his own hands. Going about to establish his own righteousness, he had not submitted to the righteousness of God. I had been his pastor for fourteen years, and had during that time labored much with him in public and in private. He was a constant attendant upon all our religious meetings, and was as exemplary in his outward walk as most Christians. He knew he could not be saved by his own works, but still hoped that his outward morality and inward anxiety would induce God to give him a new heart. After conversing with a number of other persons about their salvation, I came to this old man, and on saying a few words to him, I found him as usual, waiting for a new heart. I told him that I had labored more with him than with any other member of my congregation, and



that it had done him no good; that he had lived through a number of revivals of religion, without deriving any benefit from them, and that I had made up my mind that he must then give himself up to Christ to be saved by him, or I must give him up as an old sinner, who would not have Christ to reign over him. He seemed shocked at the thought of having his pastor give him up, and with deep anguish of mind entreated me not to abandon him as an incorrigible sinner. I told him that he was an old man, who from a child had known his Master's will, but refused to do it; that his heart was constantly growing harder, and his iniquities were multiplying; that he was then in the midst of a powerful work of grace; that his Christian friends were praying for him, and his pastor, as the ambassador of Christ, was entreating him to be reconciled to God, and it seemed to me, if he suffered the present season to pass without availing himself of offered mercy, there would be no hope in his case. He entreated me to pray for him; but I told him, that unless he would repent of his sins, and give himself up to Christ, prayer could do him no good, and before I could pray for him,

I must have him answer the question, which I had so often put to him, viz.: "Will you now submit yourself, unconditionally, into the hands of the Saviour?" After a short, though terrible, conflict with his self-righteous heart, he answered, with many tears, "by the help of God, I will." I knelt by his side and united with him in prayer. When he arose he was full of joy and peace.

That evening, at a prayer-meeting in the neighborhood, he got up and earnestly exhorted sinners to repent and submit themselves to Christ. "Don't put it off as I have done, but do it now, *it is only a moment's work.*"

He lived about ten years after this, an exemplary and active Christian, and when I visited him on his death-bed I found him trusting in the sinner's Friend.

"*It is but a moment's work.*" How true this is. It is only to give up our controversy with God; only to accept the offer of pardon and eternal life, made to us by the bleeding SAVIOUR.

Reader, have you neglected this *moment's work*? Are you still like the old man, going about to establish your own righteousness and

rejecting the righteousness of God? If so, as though God did entreat you by me, I pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

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THE BOY WHO DARE NOT GO HOME BEFORE HE  
REPENTED.

At a time of unusual interest in my congregation, we held our prayer and conference meetings in the court-house. At these meetings we used, after a season of prayer, to give an opportunity for the pastor and elders to converse individually with such persons as were anxious about their own salvation. In one of these seasons of conversation an intelligent and well-educated boy of twelve years, came to one of my elders, in great distress of mind, and inquired what he should do. The elder inquired what made him feel so distressed. The lad replied that he saw he was a great sinner in the sight of God, and was afraid that he should go to hell. He was then told that he

must go home and read the Bible, and pray to God to give him a new heart.

The boy replied, with deep emotion, "Sir, I am afraid if I wait to get home, I may die by the way, and then it will be too late."

The elder felt reproved by this simple illustration of his bad counsel, and told the young inquirer, that if he was afraid to go home in his sins, he must then repent and believe in Christ, and submit himself into his hands. The boy complied with this last advice, and went home rejoicing in hope. At a suitable time he made a public profession of religion, and has now been a member of the Presbyterian church for thirty years, and is proving the genuineness of his conversion by a well-ordered life and conversation.

Reader, was this boy wise in not daring to go home in a state of condemnation and death? Was it possible that he might die on the road and lose his soul? If so, would it not have been the height of folly for him to jeopardize his salvation when it was in his power to secure it on the spot? If these questions must be answered in the affirmative, can there be any greater folly practised in this world than

putting off things that belong to our peace? The Saviour informs us that all things are ready, and that those who come to him He will in no wise cast off. He tells us of a poor fool who lost his soul, by presuming that the next day would find him in the land of the living. The Holy Spirit tells us, "now is the accepted time." And if we do not hear his voice to-day, we will be hardening our hearts. Our own observation tells us, that life is uncertain, and when we are flattering ourselves with the hope of long life, death may be at the door.

Will you then, with all these monitions before your eyes, expose your precious soul to the endless agonies of the second death, by refusing to submit to the Saviour now? If this little narrative should fall under your eye, whoever you may be, let the wisdom of this child admonish you to neglect no longer the things which belong to your peace. Fly, O, fly, to Christ! Escape for your life, look not behind you. If you put the Saviour off to-day, to-morrow may find you with the rich man, lifting up your eyes in hell, being in torment, and asking in vain for a drop of water to cool your tongue.

THE YOUNG LADY WHO WAS SORRY SHE HAD  
COME TO THE MEETING OF INQUIRY.

At a meeting of inquiry which I held at a time of general interest in my congregation, a young lady who had been anxious about her soul for many months, with whom I had been conversing, rose up suddenly and left the room. I could not account for this singular movement until I saw her return with a young friend, who had not attended my meeting before, during the progress of the revival. I sat down by the new comer and inquired into the state of her mind on the subject of religion. She told me that she had no special concern about herself, that she had been induced to come to the meeting by the solicitation of a young friend, and not by the promptings of her own heart.

"Are you not sensible that you are a great sinner in the sight of God?"

"I am intellectually convinced of this fact, but do not feel it."



"Do you not know that as a sinner you are in a state of condemnation and death?"

"I know I shall be condemned if I do not repent before I die."

"The Bible tells us that they who believe not are condemned already. The sentence of condemnation is passed upon you, and you are only waiting, like a condemned criminal, for the order of execution. How long God may suffer you to live in this condemned state, before the sentence shall be executed, is quite uncertain, but while He does spare you, it is to give you an opportunity to obtain a pardon."

"This is a new view of the subject, but it seems from the Scriptures it must be correct."

"Do you not remember that God has said in His word, 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.'"

"I do, and I remember that you once preached from that text."

"Is not this your condition? Does not your heart take encouragement from God's delay of

the execution of His sentence to continue in impenitence?"

"I am afraid it is even so, my sins are very great."

"Is not your conduct in this thing desperately wicked? You are abusing the grace of God, by employing the time which He has given you to repent and obtain pardon, in sinning against Him."

"I feel that I am without excuse."

"God is yet waiting to be gracious, and it is my duty, as a minister of Christ, to offer you the pardon of your sins, and all the blessings which the Saviour has purchased for His people, if you will give your heart to Him. Will you accept of this offer, or will you reject it again?"

"I am not prepared to give an answer at this time."

I then told her the offer was made to her by her Saviour, that I was only acting in His name, and in the nature of the case she must either reject or accept, and I desired an answer that she might know what she was doing.

She replied, "I am not prepared to accept, and I dare not refuse."



"Do you not see that you must either accept Christ now or reject Him again?"

"I do see it, and feel it, too, and am truly sorry that I came to this meeting."

"Your staying away from the place of religious inquiry would not have relieved you from your responsibility, though it might have prevented you from seeing your guilt as you now see it. Every time through your life, when Christ has been presented to your mind, by preaching, reading, religious conversation, or meditation, you have rejected Him, and the guilt of all those accumulated acts are recorded on high, and I want to have you now determine whether you will reject your Saviour again, or here terminate your rebellion by submitting yourself to Him." She sat for nearly half an hour in deep thought, the agony of her mind evidently increasing all the time, when she said, "I will rebel no longer, pray for me that I may have grace to give myself up to my Saviour."

We knelt down together, and I offered a short prayer for her, but she remained on her knees, silently pleading for pardon, some minutes after I had ceased, and when she arose

she came to me smiling through tears, and giving me her hand, said, "I hope I have given myself away to Christ, but I am afraid I may be deceived." At that moment she fixed her eyes on a young companion, who sat weeping in another part of the room, and running to her she caught her in her arms, and exclaimed, "O, Louisa! Louisa! I don't know but I am deceived about myself, but I know that Christ is willing to receive just such poor sinners as you and I are, and I do entreat you to go to him now while he is waiting to be gracious."

In a short time Louisa began to rejoice with her young friend, but the latter, while she spoke feelingly of the preciousness of Christ, would add to almost every sentence, "But I am afraid I may be deceived."

After she became a little composed in her feelings, I said to her, "Well, M——, if you should find on examining your heart, that you are deceived, what will you do?"

"O," said she, "I will repent and give myself up to Him and put my trust in Him."

She soon became clear in her hope, and some time after made a profession of religion.

and is now a reputable member of the Church of Christ.

I am aware that there are some good men who are afraid of these sudden conversions, but from an experience of more than thirty years, much of the time in revivals of religion, I can testify that those who have been previously instructed in the doctrines of our holy religion, and have, under the strivings of God's Spirit, been brought thus intelligently and heartily to give themselves away to Christ, have made more active, and warm-hearted, and steadfast, disciples, than those who have come into the church when there was no special attention, and who have been months under concern of mind. The truth is, the instrument which the Holy Ghost employs to convince of sin, and of unrighteousness, and of judgment, is the word of God; and when the sinner is pricked in the heart by the truth, clearly seen, and throws himself at the foot of sovereign mercy, whether the struggle is one of a month, or day, or hour, the length of time will neither add to, nor the shortness of the process detract from, the evidence of the genuineness of the work.

I have usually found, that when the sinner could be brought to feel that he had a controversy with God, and that Christ, as the mediator, was offering him pardon, and that he must of necessity either accept of the terms of the gospel, or reject the offer, he would tarry long away from Christ. It is a dreadful thing, when Jesus brings the dying sinner a pardon bought with his own blood, to have the condemned creature refuse to accept; and few are so hardened as to be willing with their eyes open to assume the responsibility.

The difficulty is, that sinners generally feel that they do not reject the Saviour, but are merely deferring a decision of the great question. They have not yet made up their minds, and when they do they intend to accept of Christ. This is the manner in which Satan deceives those who have a speculative belief in the Christian system. This error I have always labored to remove; and when, by the help of God's Spirit, I have been successful, I have usually found that the greatest obstacle in the way of submission to Christ was gone, and the sinner was not far from the kingdom of God.

Reader, is this the way by which the great deceiver has hitherto kept you from the throne of grace? If so, be entreated to look at the subject in the light of God's word. You know that you are a lost sinner, that God has given his well-beloved Son to die for you, and that He has sent his ministers into all the world to carry the offers of eternal life to those, who, like yourself, are in a lost and perishing condition. As one of these ministers, I have written the foregoing narrative to show how easy it is to come to Christ; and I would now lay his offer of pardon before you, and as though He did beseech you by me, I would pray you in his stead to be reconciled to God. Now is the accepted time; all things are ready. The Father is ready to adopt you into his family; the Saviour is ready to wash your guilty soul in his own blood; the Holy Spirit is ready to take up his abode in you, and the holy angels are ready to rejoice over you as a sinner brought to repentance. The consent of your own heart, to the offer which I make you in the name of your Saviour, is all that is wanting to fill you with joy and peace in believing. And will you withhold that consent?

If you do, remember that you have again rejected the offer of eternal life, and will be called to answer for it in the LAST DAY.

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THE DANGERS OF PUTTING OFF THE THINGS  
WHICH BELONG TO OUR PEACE.

MANY years ago an interesting young man moved into the village where I was settled, from the State of Connecticut, to pursue the mercantile and milling business. He attached himself to my congregation, and was a constant attendant upon my ministry on the Sabbath. But the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, choked the word that it brought no fruit. He was prosperous in business, and accumulated property very fast. Travelling one day to a village thirty-five miles west of us, he told a young companion, who was going with him, that he was convinced the Bible was the word of God, and religion was important and necessary, and that he had made up his



mind, in three years from that day, when he thought he should have obtained an independent property, to retire from the bustle of business, and give his serious attention to the salvation of his soul.

He went to the place of his destination, and stayed there until the next day, when he started to return home, but had not got half way before he was seized with cold chills, which were followed by a raging fever, and he was brought home some time in the night in a state of wild delirium.

In the morning I was sent for by some of his Christian friends, for he had no family, to go and see him. I did so, and found him under the influence of a typhoid form of bilious fever. He lay most of the time in a stupid state, from which, when he was aroused, he knew me, but his mind was wild and wandering. I visited him often during the few days that he lived, but never found him sufficiently rational to attend to the things which belonged to his peace. He languished for nearly a week and then died—two years and fifty-one weeks before the time which he had set to prepare to meet his God. Like the young man spoken

of in the gospel, he had said to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, for I have much goods laid up for many years, and to-morrow shall be like to-day." But, alas, the morrow, though it came, was to him the commencement of a short and fatal sickness, of a hopeless death-bed, and to all human appearances, of a miserable eternity. O! how often had I warned that young man of the uncertainty of life, and entreated him not to boast of to-morrow. How often, as an ambassador of Christ, I had besought him to be reconciled to God; but he said to his blessed Redeemer, "Go thy way this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." But that convenient season never came.

Impenitent reader, was this young man wise? Would it not have been more rational for him to have sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then have relied on the divine promise that what was needful for him should be added? But if this would have been the wise course for him, then it is the wise course for you, and I would entreat you to let his folly lead you to be wise, and his sudden and unexpected death admon-



ish you of the uncertainty of life, and induce you to attend to the things which belong to your peace while it is called to-day. "The redemption of the soul is precious and it ceaseth forever."

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THE WOMAN WHO COULD NOT GIVE UP HER  
HUSBAND.

IN the spring of 1844 a lady came to my meeting of inquiry in great agony of mind. On inquiring what it was that disturbed her so much, she answered that she was a lost sinner.

I told her that was indeed true, but Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and if she was sensible of her perilous condition she should go to him.

She answered, with deep emotion, while the tears were streaming down her cheeks, that there was an insurmountable obstacle in the way of her coming to Christ.

I inquired what that obstacle was which

could keep her away from her precious Saviour.

She replied, "If I come to him I must give up everything into his hands, and be willing to have him dispose of me and mine as He will; but my husband is an impenitent man, and is very dear to me, and I am not willing to give him up. He is the idol of my heart."

"My dear Mrs. D., can you take your husband out of his Maker's hand, or in any way benefit him by staying away from Christ, and thus destroying your own soul? Would it not be better for you to give yourself up to him, and in this way put yourself in a position to pray for your husband, and by your pious example lead him to the Saviour?"

"Yes, this would be my best course, but how can I do this, while my heart cleaves to the partner of my bosom, and I cannot give him up?"

"But you have just admitted that he was in the hands of the Lord, and that your rebellion against your Maker could do him no good, why then should you encourage him in sin by your example?"

"I know it is all wrong, but my husband

lies so near my heart that I cannot give him up. I feel that he is my idol."

"Well, madam, you see that one of three things must then take place,—either you must give up your husband, or God must take him away, or your own soul must perish."

"I know it is so! I see it! I feel it in my heart, and that is what distresses me."

"Well, madam, if one of these things must take place, you should make up your mind accordingly, and as a wise woman choose now which of the three you will prefer. If your husband stands in the way of your salvation will you give him with your own soul up to Christ? Or must he be removed out of your way? Or will you perish."

She remained silent for some time, her bosom convulsed with sobs of anguish, and then, with a countenance full of joy, exclaimed, "Oh, I can give up my husband, and my own soul, too, into the hands of my blessed Redeemer. I will submit, I will be his!"

I prayed with her, and advised her to go home and examine herself to see that her surrender was an honest, and a whole-hearted one,

and that her trust was alone in the mercy of God, through the blood of the Cross.

In a short time after this interview with the wife the husband indulged a hope in Christ, and at the next communion they were both, with, as near as I can now recollect, forty others, received into the church.

Six years have since passed away, and she who could not give up her husband, is, with him, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the HOLY GHOST.

Reader, have you an impenitent companion? If you have, instead of suffering an idolatrous affection for him, or her, to keep you away from Christ, let your love for the soul of such companion lead you to go immediately to your Saviour, that your believing prayers, your pious conversation, and Christian example, may co-operate with the spirit of God to lead your loved one to the foot of the Cross.

Husbands and wives are not aware of the influence which they are exerting upon each other. They are all the time either co-operating with Satan to lead their companions down to hell, or they are co-workers together with God in preparing them for eternal glory. God

has instituted this endearing relation, not only to make us happy here, but that our sanctified affections might co-operate with his word and Spirit to prepare those to whom we are connected by this bond, to enter with us into that glorious kingdom which Christ has prepared for those who love him.

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#### CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE.

A YOUNG lady from a neighboring town called on me one afternoon to inquire what she must do to be saved. I pointed out the way of salvation to her as well as I knew how, but she could find no relief to her troubled spirit.

In spite of all I could say to her, she would still cleave to the notion that she must make some progress in reform before she came to Christ.

I preached a lecture that evening to my people from 1 John ii. 1—"We have an advocate with the Father."

In the course of my sermon I endeavored to show my impenitent hearers what they must do if they would have Christ for their advocate, by referring to the practice in courts of justice, where a man who employed a lawyer to prosecute or defend his cause must give the entire management of the matter into his hand. I told them this was true of the great *advocate with the Father*. While he offered himself freely to all, He would engage for none who would not leave their soul's salvation entirely in his hands. If they would meddle with it at all, He would leave it with them, but if they would trust it with him He would appear for them before the great white throne and be their advocate and intercessor.

After sermon, as I came down from the desk, the young lady met me with joy beaming from her countenance, and clasping my hand in hers, she exclaimed, "O, I am happy ! I am happy ! I have found an advocate with whom I can trust my cause !"

She returned home that evening, and I have never seen her since, but from what conversation I could have with her, I felt that the Holy Spirit had directed me to that text, that



He might make it a savor of life unto life to her lost soul.

What a beautiful illustration such cases furnish of the liberty and responsibility of the sinner, and of the electing love of God.

Christ was freely offered that night to every sinner in my congregation, and they were all free to have chosen him as their advocate, and yet He was as a root out of dry ground to all of them, except that stranger whose heart the Lord opened. She "worked out her own salvation with fear and trembling, while it was God who worked in her to will and do of his own good pleasure."

## THE WOMAN WHO KEPT OUT OF THE WAY.

IN 1815, while spending a Sabbath in a place where they had no stated preaching, I put up with a deacon in the church, whose sister-in-law had come from a neighboring town to spend the Sabbath with him. She was a gay, thoughtless girl of about eighteen years of age. Knowing that her widowed mother was a pious woman, and felt anxious about her daughter, I wished to have some personal conversation with her before she went home. She seemed to be aware of my intention, and so entirely avoided me, that I had no opportunity of speaking to her, until she was ready on Monday morning to return home. When she started, I accompanied her to the door, and as I assisted her to get on her horse, I told her that I was deeply concerned for her soul, I felt that she was in imminent danger, and entreated her to remember her Creator now in the days of her youth. She made me no answer, but rode off, and I felt that I had lost an opportunity of doing her good.



About a year afterwards, I was sent for to administer the sacrament to that church, and after the preparatory lecture, the deacons told me there was a candidate to be examined, who I found to be the young woman that so skillfully avoided me on a former occasion.

On inquiring what it was that first called up her attention to her lost condition, she informed me that it was the few words I said to her when helping her on her horse. That they rung in her ears all the way home, and deprived her of rest until she found it in Christ.

I mention such cases as this for the encouragement of Christians, to be instant out of season as well as in season, in warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

## THE DYING GIRL'S MESSAGE TO HER FATHER.

I ONCE was called on to go two or three miles to see a girl who it was thought would live but a short time. On arriving at the house where she lay, I found that she was the daughter of a man who had been brought up by pious parents, but had entirely neglected the religious education of his own children.

This one had become a poor abandoned creature, and had brought herself to a premature death-bed by her manner of life.

I found her in great distress of mind. The instruction received from her grand-parents was sufficient to show her that she was a lost sinner, and her life had been such that she had nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation from the presence of the Lord. I tried in vain to show her that there was provision made for the chief of sinners, and that even she would find mercy at that late hour, if she would repent and put her trust in Christ. But she felt that there was no hope for her, that her day of mercy was

passed, and that in a few hours she should be in hell. I did all I could to lead her to Christ, but in vain.

Before I left her, she requested me to see her father, and tell him from her, that her soul was lost, that she should soon be with the damned, and that he was responsible for her ruin. "O," said she, in an agony of despair, "if he had brought me up as his father did him, I should not now be lying upon this hopeless death-bed."

She died, I think that night, in the dreadful state in which I found and left her, furnishing another illustration of the guilt and danger of parental unfaithfulness.

## A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

As Christians love to contemplate the grace of God in bringing sinners to Christ, I have thought that it might be interesting to the reader to have me place among the incidents of my pastoral life a brief narrative of a work of grace which occurred in my congregation in the winter of 1826 and 1827.

The ordinances of the gospel had been regularly administered, and the word of God steadily preached there for a little more than ten years, and the church had during that period been blessed with frequent seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But for two years next preceding the time above mentioned, there had been fewer conversions to Christ, and less deep seriousness in our village, than at any time since my coming to that place. Though my people were orderly, and regular in their attendance at the sanctuary on the Sabbath, yet our weekly lectures and prayer-meetings were poorly attended, and the

means of grace seemed to produce less effect than was usual among us.

In the latter part of June, arrangements were made for celebrating the fourth of July in the usual manner, but a few Christians, feeling that they could not enjoy such a celebration, resolved to meet by themselves and observe the day as a season of thanksgiving to Almighty God for our great national blessings.

This measure was severely censured by some of the people, and many predicted a thin attendance at the sanctuary. One prominent member of my congregation remarked that, the pulpit would accommodate all who would wish to attend. But notwithstanding all the opposition, and ill-natured remarks, when the day arrived, the sanctuary was crowded at an early hour, and though seats were brought into the aisles, the congregation could not all be accommodated, and the gentleman who had predicted that the pulpit would hold all that would attend, was not only deprived of a seat, but could not get farther than the door of the vestibule, where he stood on his feet through the whole service, a deeply attentive hearer of the discourse.

I preached on the occasion from Exodus xii. 14. "This day shall be unto you for a memorial, you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations."

I endeavored to show that if the day was kept at all it should be observed as an annual thanksgiving, or a feast unto the Lord.

Contrary to all expectation the political celebration, which was held in a grove, was poorly attended, and many, as I afterwards learned, felt while there a conviction of the inconsistency and impiety of observing the day in such a manner.

In the course of the next day the general conversation in the street, and in the places of public resort, was the religious celebration of the fourth of July. Though some affected to despise it, the most were convicted in their hearts, that to be consistent we should either renounce our belief in our obligation to God for our national independence, or regard the day as a thanksgiving to him. Conversing with a lawyer, who was a prominent man in the political celebration, he said to me, "I am convinced that Christians ought to observe the



day as you have, but those who have no religion will long keep it in the other way."

From this day the conversation through our village was more on the subject of religion than it had been for a long time. The people seemed to feel that if Christians regarded religion of sufficient importance to have it govern them in their public festivities, it was time for them to inquire whether they could do without it. The people of God, too, seemed to have received a new baptism of the Spirit, and became more deeply affected with the condition of dying souls around them.

A female prayer-meeting, which had been neglected for many months, was revived, and a youths' prayer-meeting was established and kept up once a week. Our stated prayer-meetings were well attended, and a spirit of earnest and agonizing prayer began to prevail among the members of the church.

In the latter part of September, a few sinners began to attend our prayer-meeting, and on the thirtieth, a young lady was, in the judgment of charity, renewed by the Holy Ghost.

Christians seemed to consider this as a token of God's readiness to hear his people when



they cried unto him, and they felt that they could not let the Saviour go without a blessing.

Our prayer-meetings now became more frequent, and when two or three Christians would meet together accidentally, or on business, they would generally spend a few moments in prayer. In the course of a week there were two more hopefully brought to Christ; and by the fifth of November there were sixty-five indulging hopes, and some thirty-eight were added to the church.

From this Sabbath the work seemed rapidly to decline, and continued to do so until the enemies of religion began to rejoice aloud that the excitement, as they called it, was over, and only a few young people and children had been affected by it. The triumphing of the wicked, and the sighs and tears of God's people, were for several days seen and heard in our streets, and I have no doubt they were known in Heaven.

On the next Sabbath I preached, with an aching heart, from the text, the triumphing of the wicked is short. In this discourse I endeavored to show that though they might

grieve away the Spirit, and might be permitted, as some were then doing, to triumph over those who were weeping over them, and crying to God night and day for their salvation, yet their triumph would be a short one. God would soon wipe away the tears from the faces of his children, when those who now rejoiced over them would be filled with shame and everlasting contempt.

At the close of the exercises, Monday was appointed as a day of humiliation and prayer, and when it came it found the whole church with one accord in one place. Christians were deeply humbled under a sense of their sins, and, with many tears, poured out their agonizing prayer to God, that for his holy name's sake, He would hear the voice of our supplications and revive us again.

Tuesday and Wednesday the little church continued instant in prayer. On Wednesday afternoon, as we were all on our knees in the parlor of a private house, one of our elders, an old man full of the Holy Ghost, while pleading, with sobs and tears, for the return of the blessed Comforter, said, in a tone of humble confidence, "O, Lord, open our eyes that we

may see as thy servants did of old, that there are horses and chariots of fire between us and our enemies, and that they that be for us are more than they who are against us." This appeal went to all our hearts like an electric shock, and we all felt that we could rejoice and trust in God, and go forward. That evening, November 29th, at our weekly Wednesday evening lecture, two or three individuals requested the prayers of God's people, and that night one of the leading physicians in the place obtained comfort from the Lord.

The next morning, as we were a few of us met at his house for prayer, his wife requested us to pray for a sister of his, who was up-stairs in deep distress of mind. While we were on our knees praying for her, that she might be brought to submit herself to God, and put her trust in the crucified Saviour, she came down so full of joy and peace, that she wished us to return thanks to the Lord for snatching her as a brand from the burning. She told us that she had resisted the strivings of the Spirit, and had rejoiced when she thought the revival was over; but now she

could not be thankful enough that God had not given her up to walk in her own way.

A new impulse was now given to the work. Friday and Saturday were days of much fervency of prayer, and several were brought to submit themselves unto God.

The Sabbath was a solemn day, and I trust a day of salvation.

On Monday evening, at my meeting of inquiry, the room was crowded with anxious sinners, and two precious souls, we had reason to hope, were in that meeting delivered from their bondage to Satan.

The next morning, as I was going into a house where the man and his wife were the night before convicted of sin, a young man came running across the street, and in great distress threw his arms around me, and besought me to pray for him. I told him I could not do so there, but I would meet him in thirty minutes at Mr. Herrick's, a merchant who had recently been converted to Christ, and pray for him. I went into the house where I had intended to visit, found the man and his wife both without hope, and told them they might meet me in half an hour at the

place I had appointed for the young man. I went immediately to Mr. H.'s, and told him we would a few of us be at his house at nine o'clock, to spend an hour in prayer. I then notified two or three Christians of the meeting which I had thus unexpectedly appointed, and at nine we commenced praying with three or four, or perhaps half a dozen, Christians, and four anxious persons. As soon as we began to pray, the Spirit of God seemed to come down with great power, and three of the four anxious persons soon began to rejoice in the Lord. "When these things were noised abroad the multitude came together," and in a short time two good-sized rooms, which opened into each other, were crowded to overflowing. The Spirit continued present with his regenerating influence, and many who came to see what was doing, went away rejoicing in Christ.

At noon I endeavored to send the people away, but they would not be persuaded to disperse, and the whole day was spent in prayer and religious conversation.

When the evening came I sent them home,



but not until I had promised to meet them there the next morning at nine o'clock.

That evening we had a prayer-meeting in the court-room, which was much crowded and very solemn, and several there indulged a hope of pardon and eternal life. At nine o'clock the congregation was dismissed, and we returned home with more of a disposition to pray than sleep.

Wednesday morning at nine, I met the congregation again at brother H.'s, but the assembly, by the time I arrived, was so large that we were obliged to remove to the court-house, which was filled to its utmost capacity with Christians and anxious sinners. The whole congregation of the impenitent were by this time ready to acknowledge that this was the work of the Lord, and each one felt a deep interest about his soul. We remained here, with an hour's intermission, until nine at night, when the congregation were again reluctantly sent away.

The next morning we met at the sanctuary to observe our annual State thanksgiving. The house was so greatly crowded at an early hour, that though it was large, and the aisle

supplied with benches, all could not be seated. An awful solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, and for a time the only noise that was heard was the half-suppressed sobs which now and then escaped from an overburthened soul. Never before had I beheld so solemn an assembly, and never, before or since, have I felt so deeply the awfulness of the divine presence. When the hour of service had arrived I preached from the words, "Rejoice with trembling," and never have I felt so much like a dying man preaching to dying men.

Through the remainder of the week, the court-room was crowded from nine in the morning until nine at night with praying and inquiring souls, and very many of our leading citizens were brought to put their trust in the Lamb of God.

The next Sabbath was our communion, and eighty-six persons were received into the church.

From this time the revival was less powerful, though a pleasing work of grace continued through the winter.

From the last week in September until the last week in January, there were about three



hundred hopeful conversions in my own congregation, and two hundred and twenty of them became members of the Presbyterian church of which I had the charge. Of those who made a profession of their faith, as the fruits of this work, eighty were heads of families, twenty-one the husbands of pious wives; and of the whole, one hundred and twenty-seven were baptized in their infancy. The converts were of all ages from the old man of seventy to the child of eight years old; and of all classes, professions, and callings.

Though the work was deep and solemn the most perfect order prevailed throughout. I knew of but one case through the whole revival in which there was anything like disorder, and that was a female who was so overcome by the anguish of her soul that she gave vent to her feelings in cries of distress. Our evening meetings were always dismissed by nine, though those who had the command of their time would often assemble afterwards at some private house and spend much of the night in prayer.

Convictions of sin were usually very deep, and in many instances so overpowering that

the subjects of them would be confined to their beds until they obtained comfort. Sinners were taught experimentally that the heart was wholly opposed to God, and they must be saved by grace if saved at all.

The church was greatly refreshed by this work, and the members were large partakers of that love, and joy, and peace, which are the fruits of the Spirit.

Sinners who were not converted were benefited, too, by this work. They were many of them reformed in their outward conduct, and all seemed to have their consciences quickened, and to have imbibed a higher respect for religion than they had before.

There was no re-action at the close of the work, but its sweet savor remained, and was a blessing to all. I do not believe that there were three impenitent sinners in the place who would not at any time within a year, have rejoiced to have had just such another work of grace.

I have never seen or heard of a revival, since the days of the apostles, in which the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was so manifest. While Christians were greatly en-

couraged to work, they felt that all the power must come from God.

I had no assistance from abroad, except four or five sermons from neighboring pastors; but what I lacked of help from without was made up to me by the efficient labors of my elders, and the other members of the church. The brethren, like the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution which arose about Stephen, "went everywhere preaching the word." Our females, too, though they acted upon the principle that "women must keep silence in the church," were untiring in their humble and inobtrusive labors of love. All felt that each one had a place, and that it was their privilege and duty to be found in that place.

I never before knew how much moral power there was in a church, nor understood the responsibility of the brethren and sisters to God. It is not the minister alone in whose skirts the blood of souls will be found if he is unfaithful, but every member of his church who does not, by a pure and holy life, by unceasing and earnest prayer, and by all the influences which he can exert, aid and assist

his pastor in bringing souls to Christ, will have to divide the responsibility with him. In my extensive field, I could have done but little without this aid; with it the whole field was occupied, and an abundant harvest was brought into the garner of Christ.

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#### THE DREADED VISIT.

THERE was in my congregation a public house, in which neither the landlord nor his wife were professors of religion. It was quite a resort for the thoughtless and profane, and I dreaded visiting the place, but conceiving it to be my duty, I nerved myself up to the task. I was respectfully received and invited into the sitting room, where I found the tavern keeper and his wife alone. I conversed with, or rather talked to them, about the interests of their immortal souls, endeavored to show them the responsibility of their station, and urged them to give immediate attention to the things which belonged to their peace. But

could get no other answer than a promise from the landlord that he would think of it. I left the house with a heavy heart, feeling that I had done them no good.

They soon left the place, and I knew nothing of them until ten years after my visit, when I received a very kind note from the man, informing me that the conversation which seemed to be so little regarded, had resulted in the conversion of both himself and wife.

I record this incident in my pastoral life as an encouragement to ministers and Christians to go forward in their labors of love, and never suffer themselves to be deterred from warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come by the fear of a cold or unkind reception. We must avail ourselves of every opportunity to exhort and entreat sinners to be reconciled to God, if they hear us we shall save a soul from death, but if they refuse to hear, their blood will be upon their own head, and God will not *require* it at our hands.

## THE INFIDEL BIBLE CLASS.

WHEN I first commenced my ministry in the city of \* \* \* I found that there was a large class of intelligent and influential men who professed to be infidels, and kept aloof from all the means of grace. Instead of going to church on the Sabbath they would usually meet together to strengthen each other in their loose sentiments. Feeling a strong desire to bring them under the influence of the Gospel, I gave public notice on the Sabbath that the next Lord's day evening, I would state the evidences upon which I received the Bible as the word of God, and if any one chose he might, in the course of the week, send me, anonymously, his objections to those evidences, or might state the reasons upon which he founded his infidelity, and if the communication was respectful and not unreasonably long, I would read it on the following Sabbath evening to the congregation, and answer it. In the course of the week, I received a well-written communication, impugning the evidences I had



stated as those on which I rested the claims of the Bible to our belief, and some arguments in favor of infidelity.

On Sabbath evening, I found that my house was crowded, and that the individuals for whose benefit I had instituted this kind of meeting were there. I read the communication, and answered it as clearly as I was able, and gave liberty for the continuance of the same course every week until I should give notice to the contrary.

I continued in this way to receive and answer infidel objections through the winter, and had the satisfaction of finding that my labors were not in vain in the Lord. A number of that very class were convinced of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures, and were subsequently brought into the church.

The course which I adopted operated in the following manner: 1st. It convinced infidels that ministers did not wish to stand aloof from them or call them hard names, but that we are willing to meet them on common ground, and affectionately to reason with them upon the subjects about which we differ.

2d. When they sat down to write out their



objections to the Bible, and the religion which it teaches, they found that they had not as many arguments in support of their theory as they had supposed.

3d. When some of their leading spirits would send me a communication containing what they had all been in the habit of considering unanswerable arguments against the Bible, and they saw how easy such objections were disposed of, and how illy they could bear examining in the light of truth, it shook their confidence in the wisdom of their leaders, and in their own safety, and made them desirous of knowing more about the Christian religion.

4th. Last, but not least, it brought them under the influence of the gospel, which was made to many of them the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto salvation.

The great difficulty of converting infidels does not lie in the strength of their arguments, but in their prejudices against Christianity, and in their ignorance of the abundance of the evidence in favor of the Bible and the religion which it teaches. The great mass of them are not only ignorant of the Bible, and of what Christianity is, but of the facts upon which the

infidel argument rests. They take refuge in infidelity to get rid of the restraint which the Bible imposes upon their lusts and affections, and not because they have given the subject a candid and careful examination. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." It is his heart, and not his understanding, which leads him away from the Holy One; and we wish to bring him under the influence of the gospel, not so much to enlighten his mind as to be instrumental in the renovation of his heart.

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#### THE WOMAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF HER HUSBAND.

A WOMAN came into my meeting of inquiry in deep distress of mind, who I found upon inquiry was much alarmed about her condition as a lost sinner, but had been kept from the Saviour by the fear of her husband.

I endeavored to show her that she should fear God and obey him, and then leave her husband where she had left her own soul—in the hands of the Saviour.

After a severe struggle in her mind, the Lord seemed to have caused her heart to receive the truth, and she became quiet and happy. But before she left the meeting she came to me and inquired what she should do. Her husband, she said, was a man of violent temper, and he was desperately opposed to religion, and she felt really afraid to have him know what her feelings were.

I told her to go home, and as soon as she could see her husband alone, to tell him what she hoped the Lord had done for her soul, and to entreat him affectionately to go along with her in the service of her blessed Redeemer. This was just before I dismissed my meeting for dinner.

In the afternoon I had not been long in the meeting before this woman entered it with her husband, though he had never been in the habit of attending religious meetings. God had made the affectionate appeal of his wife like an arrow in his heart, which had left a wound that could only be healed by the blood of Christ. In the course of the afternoon, he, too, could rejoice in his Saviour, and went home with his wife to erect a family altar.

In a few weeks they both united with the church of which I was the pastor, and up to the latest knowledge I had of them they were beloved and respected members.

I have known many instances where the conversion of the wife has led to the salvation of the husband, and the conversion of the husband to the awakening and conversion of the wife; and I cannot but feel that impenitent husbands and wives will be responsible to God for the loss of each others' souls. If either would repent, and do works meet for repentance, the truth spoken in love by the converted companion would be the most powerful means that could be employed to bring the unconverted one to Christ; and when they live on in sin together, and die and go down to hell, their blood will be required at each others' hands.

## THE WORKING CARD.

IN the fall of my first year at \* \* \* \*, my church became anxious that we should have a protracted meeting or some special effort for the salvation of sinners. For various reasons which I need not mention here, I was opposed to a protracted meeting at that time among my people.

In the course of the week I prepared the following card :

## RESOLUTIONS,

*Adopted by the bearer of this Card.*

1. *Resolved*, That as I am a sinner, redeemed by the blood of Christ, I will do all that I can to save the souls for whom he died.

2. *Resolved*, That to prepare myself to do good to others I will strive to have the same mind in me which was in JESUS CHRIST.

3. *Resolved*, That I will from time to time select from among my neighbors some one or more individuals with whom I will, in tenderness and affection, labor steadily, daily, if pos

sible, or even many times a-day, until God shall either bring them to Christ, or I shall be convinced that I should give them up.

4. *Resolved*, That I will carry those with whom I thus labor on my heart, and pray for them continually, and with them frequently, if they will permit me so to do.

5. *Resolved*, That while I labor, and pray for the salvation of sinners I will depend alone on the Holy Ghost to make me successful in my work.

I had enough of these cards printed to supply every member of the church with a copy, and on the next Lord's day distributed them, with the understanding that so long as any individual should retain his card he should consider himself bound by the resolutions, and when he wished to be released from them he must return the card to me.

The next night after the distribution I was called from my bed to go and visit a distressed sinner, which was a commencement of a work of grace that continued with us all the fall and winter, and resulted, as I trust, in bringing many souls to a knowledge of the Saviour.

A reason that Christians' labor with the im-



penitent is not more productive is, that it is so much scattered that the impression made by one visit is worn out before another is made, if made at all, and thus Satan has a fair opportunity of catching away the word out of the heart. But if the labor should be followed up every day, and the truth in this way kept burning upon the heart and conscience, the result would astonish the most sanguine laborer. He would find that God was not unfaithful to forget his work and labor of love, nor forgetful of the promise that he that should go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, should doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. This is a kind of labor that we need at this day; it is one, too, that the weakest brother, or sister, in the church can perform, and one which will act upon those labored with, and re-act with power upon the heart and life of the laborer.

Let me entreat the Christian reader to try the experiment and see if he will not water and be watered also himself.

First, think much of your own obligation to Christ, and pray much to God to restore unto you the joys of his salvation, and uphold you



by his free spirit, that you may be prepared to teach transgressors their ways, and that sinners may be converted unto him. Don't ask to have the joys of your salvation restored that you may be happy, but that you may be useful. Selfishness is the gangrenous part of the body of sin and death, and Christians should endeavor to keep it out of their hearts.

Secondly, Select from among your acquaintances one or more that you will be most likely to have an influence with, write their names in a book, and on your own heart, and in your labor and prayers with and for them, bear in mind that the redemption of their souls is precious, and that it will soon cease forever. This will keep you much at the throne of grace, and will increase and sweeten your communion with God, while it will elevate your Christian affections, and imbue your heart with the love of souls.

## THE FAMILY THAT HAD NEVER READ THE BIBLE.

IN the progress of a revival of religion in my congregation in the winter of 1830 and 1831, one of the brethren, who was visiting families in a border settlement, went into a house where he found the woman alone. On conversing with her on her religious feelings, she told him that she did not know anything about religion. He inquired if she had never attended a meeting, or read the Bible; she said she had not since she was old enough to remember anything about it.

He then commenced giving her a brief account of the Creation, and of the fall of man, and of the plan adopted by God for his recovery. When he had proceeded as far as the fall, and its consequences upon the human family, and told her that she was herself, in consequence of it, a sinner against God, and as such exposed to his wrath in hell to all eternity, she became deeply distressed with a sense of her lost condition, and wept bitterly.

He next told her of the provision which

God had made for her salvation, and exhorted her to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that she might be saved. On hearing this she became composed and happy, and requested him to wait until she went and called her husband, adding that he needed this Saviour as much as she did.

He did wait, and when the husband came in, found him almost as ignorant as the wife, and repeated to him the epitome of the Bible history, apparently with the same effect which it had produced on the woman. He spent most of the afternoon with them in prayer and conversation, and when he came away left them both hoping in Christ.

I visited the family soon after myself, and found them hoping, and anxious to learn all that they could about the Bible, neither of them being able to read. They continued attentive to all the means of grace, and in process of time became members of the church, dating their hope back to the visit above mentioned.

They did not remain in the place a great while after they united with the church, but while they remained with us gave us no reason

to doubt the sincerity of their profession, or the genuineness of their conversion.

If these were truly converted to Christ, as I hope they were, they, like those Samaritans who believed on the word of the woman from the well, had to rely on the testimony of an uninspired individual, and will be swift witnesses against those sinners who, though brought up as it were in the house of God, and with the Bible in their hands, reject the counsel of the Most High against their own souls.

It may seem strange to some that there could be such ignorance in this Christian land, but to my knowledge this is by no means an isolated case. I once saw a lad of fourteen or fifteen who appeared like a bright boy, but neither knew who made him, nor that there was any such a person as Jesus Christ. And yet this boy had parents, and lived in a neighborhood where the gospel was occasionally preached.

These things ought not so to be, and if Christians would do their duty such gross darkness could not be found in any neighborhood where the people of God were living.

## THE DIFFUSIVE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

DURING the progress of a revival of religion in my congregation, a young lady came from a neighboring town to visit an uncle, and remained several days. While she was with us she became sensible of her lost and perishing condition as a sinner, and sought and found a resting place in the redemption purchased by Christ. She was a member of a select school in her own neighborhood, which consisted of sixteen young ladies; and when she returned home she availed herself of the earliest opportunity to tell her young school mates of what the Lord had done for her soul, and was ready to do for theirs, if they would only repent of their sins, and embrace the blessed Redeemer. The Holy Spirit seemed to use her instrumentality in operating on their hearts, and in a few days they were all rejoicing with her in hope.

The pastor of the young lady, who was an excellent man, perceiving what the Lord was doing among his people, invited me to come

over and preach a few times for him. I complied with his request, and spent two days in the place, preached three times, attended three meetings of inquiry, and, in company with the worthy minister, visited many families. We scarcely spoke with an individual, while in that neighborhood, who did not appear deeply anxious about the salvation of his soul, and was not ready to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" The work continued to spread, and under the faithful and judicious instruction of their *spiritual guide*, one hundred and fourteen immortal souls were in a few weeks brought, in the judgment of charity, to the foot of the Cross, and were, in due time, added to the church.

Here seemed to have been three important agencies, without which we are not authorized to say that this rural parish would have been visited with this precious outpouring.

First. There was the agency of a faithful pastor, who had for years been instructing the people in the great doctrines and duties of our holy religion, and thus preparing them for such a work of grace.

Secondly. There was the agency of this



young female, whose heart the Lord had opened, in the revival in my congregation, to receive the truth, and bear it to her young companions. They had been taught by their parents, and by their pastor, the great doctrines of our holy religion, but now they heard them from the lips of a young companion, in the glowing language of a young heart beaming with love to her Redeemer, and love to the souls for whom he had bled and died. And,

Thirdly. There was the powerful agency of the Holy Ghost, without which all other agencies will be unavailing, bringing to the remembrance of the people the words of truth, so often spoken in love by the pastor, and removing those worldly objects from around the heart, which had hitherto prevented the light of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, from illuminating the dark mind.

I have recorded this incident among the reminiscences of my pastoral life for the purpose of showing the reader how much good may, and oftentimes does, flow from the faithful labors of one warm-hearted child of God; and how fearful a responsibility those will



incur who entirely neglect to do anything by way of personal effort for the dying souls around them. God works through the agency of his people, and the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem are only built when the people have a mind to work. We can trace a visible connection between the efforts of this new convert to Christ, with her young companions, and the blessed work of grace in the congregation to which she belonged, and we are not authorized to say that there would have been any special work there at that time if those efforts had been wanting. They seemed to have formed an important link in the chain of God's purposes of mercy to that place, and may have been as indispensable as the continuance of the mariners in the ship was to the preservation of Paul and his companions from a watery grave. And who can tell how often the faithful efforts of an individual may be all that is wanting to make it consistent for God to pour out his Spirit, and save hundreds of souls.

Reader, are you sure that it will not appear in the judgment-day that your neglect has often stood in the way of such a work of the saving power of your heavenly Father? And

if it should be so, will not the blood of souls be in *your skirts*?

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#### THE GIRL WHO WAS AFRAID OF HER PARENTS.

AMONG the individuals who were present, on a particular occasion, in one of my meetings for conversation, was a young woman who was in very deep distress. On inquiring the cause of her anguish of mind, she said she was a lost sinner, and was afraid of the wrath of God.

I inquired if she did not know that Jesus came to save lost sinners.

She replied that she did, and had long known that fact.

"And why then," said I, "do you not go to him and be saved?"

"I am a stranger in this place. My mother and her husband who is my step-father, are both angry at me for attending these meetings, and if I should become a Christian they will turn me out in the streets."

"And is this all that keeps you away from Christ?"

"I think it is all that prevents me from being a Christian."

"But you must remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that those who esteem father or mother, or even their own lives, more than him cannot be his disciples; and that if you are more afraid of the displeasure of your earthly parents than you are of the righteous displeasure of God, you must remain in a state of condemnation and death."

"O, I cannot do that," she exclaimed, the tears streaming down her cheeks, "I cannot do that."

"Well, Miss, you must either do that, or you must be willing to be cast out from house and home for Christ's sake."

She remained for some time in great agony of spirit, and then, with a smile of joy shining through a profusion of tears, said, "I will be the Lord's."

I asked her if she had counted the cost, and meant to adhere to her purpose, though it might expose her to all that she feared.

She said she thought she had, and felt that

without any reserve or condition, she had thrown herself upon the mercy of her blessed Saviour.

She returned home that evening, and to her surprise and joy found her mother in deep distress about her own salvation, and neither parent ever made any further objections to her serving the Lord according to the dictates of her own conscience.

I have never ventured to persuade sinners that the sacrifices consequent upon their becoming pious would be less than they feared, but have endeavored to show them that they ought to prefer suffering any amount of affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

## THE PERSECUTED WIFE.

AMONG the members of my church was a woman of great delicacy of feeling, and of ardent and consistent piety, who had a husband that was a Universalist, and possessed a violent and ungoverned temper. He was much displeased with his wife for her religious predilections, and often reproached her as a bigot, and a fanatic, because she would not go with him to the universal meeting.

To sustain his reputation as a gentleman he used often to attend our meeting, when the Universalist did not preach, and treated me with great respect when I visited his house.

One Sabbath, when I preached in the morning at another place, the Universalist preached in the village, and as the wife could not attend my morning service, her husband urged her to go with him to the place of universal meeting.

She told him that God had directed his people, "If any one came among them and did not bring the doctrine of Christ, to go not after him, neither bid him God speed, for those

who encouraged him would be a partaker of his evil deeds."

He told her that she could do as she pleased but if she did not go and hear his minister in the morning, she should not go to hear me. In the afternoon, seeing his wife dressed for church, he inquired where she was going.

She replied, "to meeting."

He responded that he had told her, if she did not attend meeting with him in the morning, she should not go in the afternoon.

She then told him, with great gentleness, that he knew she had lived with him a great while, and done all she could to make him happy, and had never disobeyed him, except when his commands conflicted with the plain commands of her heavenly Father, but in such cases she must obey God rather than man.

Upon hearing this he flew in a great rage, and told her that if she went to hear me preach that afternoon, she should never again enter his house.

She went to meeting as usual, but when she returned he met her at the door, and pushing her off the steps with violence, told her to be gone and return no more.



She made no reply, but went to her daughter's, who lived in the village, and was told by her son-in-law to make their house her home.

In the evening, the husband, having got over the violence of his passion, and beginning to feel the loneliness of his situation, came to his son-in-law's, and asked his wife if she was not going home.

She told him that he had turned her out of his house, and forbidden her to return—that the Bible taught, that where the husband or wife was pious, and the other party was not, it was the duty of the believer to continue with his or her companion, and do them all the good possible ; but if the unbeliever chose to depart, or separate from his or her believing companion, he might depart, and the brother or sister was no longer under bondage. That she had acted upon that principle, and had borne much abuse from him for Christ's sake ; but now, as he had broken his marriage contract, and caused a separation, she did not conceive herself any longer under bondage to him, and did not calculate to return.

He went away deeply mortified, but in some



anger, and spent the night with his afflicted children.

The next morning he returned, but found her firmly adhering to her resolution, and though she treated him with respect and kindness, she utterly refused to return with him. In the evening he came again, and appeared broken down and humbled, and acknowledged that he had treated her improperly, and promised that if she would forgive him and return to him, he would never again treat her unkindly, or cross her in her religious feelings. Upon receiving these assurances she returned with him, to the great joy of himself and his children, and I have reason to believe that to the day of her death he kept his promise. He was finally won, by the blessing of God upon the example and conversation of his wife, and before she died she had the comfort of seeing him unite with the church of which she was a member.

## THE DAILY PRAYER MEETING.

At a time when there was no special attention to religion in my congregation, I suggested to my Elders, the plan of having a daily prayer meeting in one of the basement rooms of our church, through the fall and winter. They were pleased with the suggestion, and we adopted the following regulations, etc.: The janitor was to open the house, and keep the room warm, from nine in the morning until twelve, and from two in the afternoon until four. Any Christian who felt that he would like to spend a little time, within those hours, in prayer, was invited to go to that place, and if there should be no one there, to kneel down alone and plead with the hearer of prayer, to pour out his Holy Spirit upon our city, and if there were any there, to spend the time in united prayer with those assembled for the same object. All had the privilege of remaining as long or as short a time as they pleased.

The impenitent were informed of the meeting and invited to attend it, at any time, and

at all times, when they wished to be where the people of God were assembled to pray for them.

The result of this arrangement was, that there were usually two or three Christians on their knees in that place, pleading the promises, that where that number should meet in Christ's name, he would meet with them, and that when they should agree touching anything they might ask, he would do it for them. If a brother or a sister had only time to unite in one season of prayer, they would join that little circle, and if an impenitent sinner wished to hear the voice of prayer, he or she would visit that place. I used to go there as often as I could, and usually found from one to fifteen or twenty engaged in prayer, and oftentimes a number of impenitent persons, whom the Lord had directed to our little BETHEL.

The Almighty heard the prayers which were constantly going up from that place, and shed down his Spirit like the dew upon the mown grass, and like gentle showers that water the earth, and our basement room became the birth-place of souls, as well as a place of refreshing to the people of God. This plan

consumed but little time, broke in upon no business arrangements, created no unusual excitement, and made no noise; and yet was a means in the hand of God of strengthening the graces of his children, and of bringing many souls home to their Heavenly Father. Though there was at no time what would be called a powerful revival, yet there was a gentle work of grace going on in my congregation through the entire period of our meeting; and its precious influence upon the church and society was visible for a long time, and, I have no doubt, was an occasion of joy among the angels in Heaven.

It seems strange to me when I look at the precious promises made to humble importunity to God, and at the same time look at the great company of dying sinners by which we are surrounded, that Christians are not more constantly on their knees at the throne of grace. The Lord loves the souls of dying sinners, and is more ready to give his Holy Spirit for their conversion, than parents are to give bread to their hungry children; but to render it consistent for him to come down in his saving power, He must be sought unto by his

children to do it for them. "The salvation of Israel must come out of Zion, and when she travails she shall bring forth."

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#### THE CONVERSION OF A LITTLE CHILD.

IN the congregation where the writer was first settled, there was a little boy who had been consecrated to God in baptism at eight days old, and carefully taught the great truths of religion, as fast as his opening intellect was capable of understanding them. He never knew a day when his parents did not bend the knee morning and evening in family prayer, and had no recollection of the first time he was carried to the house of God; nor could he remember when he did not know that he was a lost sinner, and that Jesus Christ was crucified for his salvation.

When this child was a few days short of five years old, his father took him in his arms and carried him to our Wednesday evening conference and prayer-meeting. That evening I read

a chapter in the Bible, and after I had lectured upon it, gave all present an opportunity to ask questions in relation to the subject of the discourse; when, to my surprise, the little boy, with great modesty and much feeling, made several inquiries respecting the meaning of the chapter, in a way that satisfied me he was making application of its truths to his own case.

After meeting, his father took him in his arms and carried him home, when the boy remarked that he was very glad he had been to the meeting, it made him feel so very happy.

From that evening the child appeared as if "old things had passed away, and all things had become new." His closet was his chosen retreat, in which he spent much time, and where he experienced some sore temptations from the adversary of souls. He frequently came from his place of prayer with his eyes filled with tears, and told his mother the joys or sorrows he had experienced there. When playing with his young associates, if they used bad language, he would reprove them with tears, and leaving them return to his quiet home.



At thirteen he united with the church of Christ, and has now been for sixteen years preaching the gospel, and has been a means in the hands of God of bringing hundreds to Christ.

How much encouragement parents have, both from the promises and providences of the Most High, to offer up their children a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," and to be instant in season and out of season, by example and precept, to train them up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." How could these parents have brought a richer reward of glory to the divine name, or contributed more to the eternal well-being of the human family, or done more to provide a rich inheritance for their child, than they did in dedicating and bringing him up for Christ? They might have brought him up to shine in the circles of fashion, or to amass wealth, or to exert a commanding influence in the senate or at the bar; but if they could have secured for him all these distinctions, how mean and contemptible they would have appeared in comparison with the durable riches which his religious education was the means of conferring

on him. All earthly distinctions are short-lived, and must soon pass away, but they that "be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and EVER."

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THE LORD OFTEN IN ANSWERING OUR PRAYERS  
GIVES US BETTER THINGS THAN WE ASK.

WHEN I first took charge of the church in \* \* \* \*, all the prominent men were living without God in the world. Among this class were our two leading physicians, who, by their horse-racing and gambling, and ungodly conversation, were poisoning the morals of the rising generation, and encouraging those of riper years in the way of sin.

I felt very deeply the deleterious influence which these two men were exerting; and seeing no other remedy, I besought the Lord to send us a pious physician, that our people might have the privilege, when sick, of having a man to attend them, who, instead of having

his mind filled with the race-course and the card-table, would be under the influence of the fear of God. My heart was greatly set on this thing, as a blessing I thought indispensable to the interests of religion in that place. But while I was praying for it, to my inexpressible joy the Holy Spirit came down and reclaimed the two wicked ones, and brought them into the church, and made them active and successful in counteracting the evil which they had been doing in the community. The ablest of the two, in due time, was chosen as one of our ruling elders, and became a most efficient helper in the work of the Lord.

If the Hearer of prayer, in answering my petitions, had sent me my pious physician, we should still have had the influence of these two prominent men to contend against; but in his better way we were relieved from this evil influence, and had two pious physicians instead of one, and men who possessed the confidence of the people, instead of a stranger, who would have had for a long time but a limited influence among us.

A REVIVAL RESULTING FROM AN OVERSIGHT IN  
THE CHURCH.

A CONGREGATION in central New York was thrown into great disorder, and for years had its influence for good paralyzed by a quarrel between two of the leading families in the village. Various efforts had been made to settle the difficulty without effect, when the church, with the consent of the contending parties, agreed to submit the whole matter to a number of ministers not belonging to that presbytery, of whom I was one. Invitations were accordingly sent to those persons who had been agreed on by the church and the parties, and we all assembled on the day appointed, to enter upon the business for which we had been selected. I was chosen chairman of the council, and the parties were present with their advocates and their witnesses, all in readiness to commence the contest. But as the council belonged to other presbyteries than the one with which that church stood connected, I called for the commission under which

we were to act, when to our surprise we were informed that their presbytery had not even been consulted on the subject. We at once agreed that we had no power to act officially in the matter, but recommended to the church and the parties, to unite with us in a season of prayer, for the gracious interposition of God's Spirit. All seemed to fall in with this proposal, and we adjourned from the place which was intended as the arena for a desperate conflict between the brethren, to a place where prayer was wont to be made. As this was about ten o'clock in the morning, we continued at the throne of grace until twelve, when we had a recess for dinner. After dinner we re-assembled, and engaged again in our supplications for the restoration of peace and love to that afflicted church. In a short time one of the contending parties came forward, and with many tears confessed that he had been awfully guilty, and begged the forgiveness of God, of the other party, and of the church, for his unchristian conduct. As soon as he sat down the other party came and insisted that he was the guilty originator of the trouble, and that if his brother had done wrong, it was in con-

sequence of provocations which he had given, and he wished the forgiveness of his brother, and of the church, and of God. The two principals having thus been brought to repentance, those who had become their partisans followed their example, and for a long time we sat there hearing brethren who had been engaged in an unholy strife, confessing their sins one to another, and praying one for another.

That prayer-meeting was not only the end of contention between those two families, but the commencement of a revival of religion in that place, during which many souls were, in the judgment of charity, converted to Christ.

Had the church taken the regular steps in this case, and provided a commission for us from their presbytery, we might have decided the question of right and wrong; but through this oversight all parties were driven to the throne of grace, and the Lord in answer to the prayers, subdued the hearts of the belligerent brethren and thus removed the obstacles out of the way of sinners, and prepared the church for a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God.

Contentions among brethren always grow



out of their want of a heavenly mind, and usually take place in the absence of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Churches should therefore labor to keep near the throne of God, and should tremble when they see his reviving and sanctifying presence is withdrawn.

Individual Christians ought also to feel, that when their bodies cease to be the living temples of the Holy Ghost, they know not to what great lengths they may go in wickedness. The Saviour has taught us that if we love him and keep his words, the Father will love us, and He and the Father will come unto us, and make their abode with us. Here is safety, but it can be found no where else.

My Christian brother, does Christ manifest himself in this way to you? If so, give him all the glory, and be careful to do nothing that will drive him from you; but if not, give yourself no rest until you can feel the presence of your blessed Saviour. The evidence of our discipleship, is Christ formed in us the hope of glory.

## THE CONVERTED RUMSELLER.

AMONG the members of my congregation was a man who availed himself of a grocer's license, to sell intoxicating drinks, in connection with a dry goods business. His dramtable in this connection was very productive. It not only yielded him the profits on a large amount of liquor sold, but brought to his store many persons who wished to buy dry goods, and after they had been there a little time made them feel rich, and induced them to buy many things which they would not have purchased if they had not been drinking.

I had labored much with him, but had not been able to make any perceptible impressions on his mind. The love for his ungodly gain had closed up every avenue to his conscience, and there seemed to be but little hope of his ever being reformed. But what was impossible with man was easy with God. Previous to a communion season, I preached upon the subject of Hezekiah's Passover. The rum-seller was present on the occasion, and the

spirit of the Lord sent the truth to his heart. He went home, but could not rest. He felt, as he afterwards told us, that the Almighty had proclaimed a passover, and had sent the priests to invite all the people to come and keep a feast unto the Lord, and that one of the Lord's messengers had invited him, but by his own wickedness he was disqualified to come. This train of thought haunted his imagination all night, and the next morning he gave the key of his store to one of his clerks, and tried to divest himself of his painful feelings, by walking about the fields, and amusing himself with what he might see. But which ever way he turned, the preparation for the passover was before him, and the invitation of the Lord's messenger was ringing in his ears. In the afternoon, as a number were engaged in prayer at a brother's house, the runseller came in, and with deep feeling informed us of his state of mind, and besought us to pray for him. We did so; and many supplications went up to the throne of grace for the salvation of this hitherto incorrigible sinner. He remained with us, and in the course of the afternoon we could say of him as was said of Saul of Tar-

sus, "BEHOLD HE PRAYETH." He expressed his hope in the forgiving mercy of God, and went home rejoicing in his Saviour. But we who had known him long, and who knew the sacrifice he would be called to make, had many fears that his apparent change would be like the early cloud and the morning dew.

The next morning he called at my house, to converse with me about the great things which the Lord had done for him. In the course of our conversation, I said to him, "Mr. L., are you sensible of the sacrifice which you will have to make, if you would be a follower of Christ?" He started as if he was alarmed, and earnestly inquired, "what sacrifice?"

I replied that he would have to give up his trade in alcoholic drinks. "O!" said he, seeming to be greatly relieved, "I have done that already; I directed my clerks last night never to sell any more intoxicating drink." Upon my expressing my joy at this resolution, he replied, "The only ground of acceptance with Christ is, that we shall give all up for him, and this was the condition upon which he accepted me, and do you think I would retain my rum table?"

From that time this rumseller became a devoted Christian, and for twenty-four years he has been an active member of the Presbyterian church.

Reader, think of the condition upon which Christ accepted you, if you are his follower, and see to it that you keep nothing back, lest like Ananias and Saphira you should be found lying not unto man but unto God.

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#### A MAN COMPELLED TO COME IN.

THERE lived in my congregation a lawyer of eminence in his profession, and of strictly moral habits; but who was wholly devoted to his business, and heedless about the things which belonged to his eternal well-being. In a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, while a number of us were engaged in a prayer-meeting, I observed that one of my elders rose up suddenly and left the house. His mind, as he afterwards told me, became deeply impressed with the guilt and danger of



the lawyer of whom I have been speaking, and he resolved to make one effort for his salvation. In accordance with this resolution, he went directly to the office, where he found the man whom he sought, at the writing-table, deeply engaged in preparing for court. The elder, after the common salutations, said, "Mr. I., I want you to go with me to Mr. H.'s." "What for?" inquired the man of the bar. "We have a prayer-meeting there," said the elder, "and I want you to attend it." "O," said the lawyer, "I cannot possibly do that, my business is crowding me, and I must attend to it." "Your business," said the elder, "is of no importance in comparison with the salvation of your immortal soul, which you are exposing to the miseries of hell, by every moment's delay." This plain address, with the solemn and earnest manner in which it was delivered, overcame the lawyer's resolution to continue at his business, and in a few moments, they both entered the prayer-meeting. We were engaged in prayer when they came in, and as soon as there was an opportunity, the elder said to me, "Mr. I. has come to this meeting, and I request an interest in the prayers of this assembly for the



salvation of his soul." As it was very evident from the appearance of Mr. I., that he had no objection to the proposal of his friend, we knelt down and united all our hearts in one voice, to plead for the soul of a man who hitherto had no disposition to pray for himself. The Lord heard our prayers, and before the close of the meeting, the lawyer indulged a hope in the grace of God, through his long-neglected Saviour.

At the next communion he, with more than seventy others, united with the church. He was subsequently chosen, and ordained, to fill the office of a deacon; in which capacity he served the church till the day of his death, which occurred about twenty years subsequent to the time of his attending this prayer meeting.

Reader, here is another instance of the blessing of God attending the faithful and affectionate effort of an individual, to save a soul from death. Are you in the habit of making such efforts? or does your cold heart wish to be excused from such a service? Those whose hearts are as cold as your own will very readily excuse you now, but will your lost

friends and neighbors, when they shall meet you at the judgment-seat, excuse you for not making every possible effort to save their undying souls from the lake that burns with fire and with brimstone forever?

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THE DANGER OF PURSUING A BUSINESS WHICH IS  
INCONSISTENT WITH A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

THERE was in my congregation a man who lived by the profits of the gill cup and the gambling table. He was very popular, and made his business very profitable in a pecuniary point of light. He was deaf to all remonstrances of Christians, and was a means of doing much mischief to the souls of men.

Our little church were in the habit, when they had tried all other means to remove such nuisances, of complaining of them to the Lord. They did so in this instance, and earnestly besought the hearer of prayer to save us from the influence of our drinking houses and gambling tables, and all those other corrupting

practices, which, at that time, were fearfully prevalent. The Lord heard our prayers, and sent down his Holy Spirit in copious effusions upon our congregation, and through our village. Many rumsellers were converted, and gave up their business; but the one which I have mentioned, obstinately held on his way. The revival, however, thinned out his customers, and so much lessened his profits, that he complained to a pious lady, who was conversing with him on the subject of religion, that he was afraid the religious excitement would ruin him; but still, he obstinately persisted in his work of death.

In a little more than three years from the close of this work of grace, there were indications of another refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But before there were any conversions, the liquor seller above alluded to, was taken sick, and though neither his friends nor his physician considered his case at all dangerous, he requested to see me. I visited him and found him apparently much distressed in his mind, but unable to converse with me. He would often arouse himself, and with much interest in his looks begin to ask me some

questions, or to tell me how he felt, but before he could finish the sentence he would fall into a kind of uneasy sleep, or stupor. After praying for him I left him, and before the next morning had dawned upon our village, the man who was afraid the revival would ruin him, had gone to the judgment, to meet those lost souls whom he had helped to destroy.

This man had lived through one of the purest and most precious revivals that I have ever witnessed. He had been the subject of many prayers, and of some personal labors, but, like Balaam of old, he loved the wages of unrighteousness too well to exchange them for the glorious inheritance of the people of God. He hated and opposed the work of grace, because it conflicted with his unholy employments. And the Almighty would not suffer him to see another outpouring of that Spirit which he had so often grieved. He was brought to the threshold of another glorious revival, but was not permitted to feel its awakening influence, nor to oppose its progress. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the righteous out of temptation, and to reserve the

wicked unto the day of judgment to be punished.

Reader, are you engaged in any business, or pursuing any course of life, which is inconsistent with the progress of a pure and powerful revival of religion? Are your employments and amusements, all of them, of such a nature that they could exist with the melting influence of the Spirit of God in your own heart, and would be friendly to the progress of a work of grace in the hearts of those around you? If not, you stand in the way of the chariot of redeeming mercy, and are in danger of being crushed by it. O! it is a fearful thing to resist God's work of love. When his people pray for the salvation of the world, they virtually ask the Almighty to remove incorrigible sinners out of the way. O! how often I have seen the poet's fearful stanza verified:

With dreadful glory God fulfils  
What his afflicted saints request,  
And with Almighty wrath reveals,  
His love, to give his children rest.

THE DANGER OF BEING ASHAMED OF THE WORK  
OF THE SPIRIT ON OUR OWN HEARTS.

A MAN in my congregation, who was born of pious parents, was blessed with a pious wife, and was a constant attendant upon the ordinary means of grace, was once deeply awakened by the Spirit of the Lord. His wife was at the time of his awakening away from home, and when she returned she saw that something was the matter with her husband, but said nothing to him until they had retired to bed ; when perceiving that he could not sleep, she asked him what was the matter. He replied, with emphasis, nothing, intending, as he afterwards told a friend, to conceal from her his own state of mind. The moment the word passed his lips, all his conviction of sin, and all his concern about the salvation of his own soul were gone ; and though years have since passed away they have never returned. He is yet a constant attendant on the preaching of the gospel, and says he knows he is in the broad way to destruction, but has no feeling.

What a fearful thing to be ashamed of, or to



trifle with, the gracious operation of the Spirit of God in the work of man's redemption! If this man did not lie to the Holy Ghost, he lied about him, and grieved Him from him, while He was engaged in the gracious work of awakening him to a sense of his lost condition. He was ashamed of Christ, and though I do not consider his crime as coming within the definition of that sin which hath no forgiveness, I am afraid it was such a grieving of the Spirit as will result in the execution of that fearful threatening of the SAVIOUR:—"He who is ashamed of me in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of his Father and the holy angels."

Reader, let me entreat you never to be ashamed of the work of the Holy Spirit upon your own heart. His visits are visits of love, and woe to that soul from whom He shall finally depart.

## THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF WELL-DIRECTED MEETINGS OF THE JUDICATORIES OF THE CHURCH.

THE time has been when in central and western New York, the meetings of our Presbyteries and Synods left behind them an influence for good. The brethren loved one another, and came together, not to engage in fierce disputes about comparatively unimportant matters, but to stir up each other's pure minds by way of remembrance, to pour out their hearts together at the throne of grace, and devise measures for promoting pure and undefiled religion among the congregations under their care. This was peculiarly the case from 1816 to 1831, with the synod and presbytery to which it was the happiness of the writer to belong through all that period. Our meetings were holy convocations, and the churches all esteemed it a favor to have us meet with them. I would not be understood as making an invidious comparison between by-gone days and the present time, but simply state what I know, and testify what I have seen.

In 1830 I attended a meeting of the synod, which was all I have described, in its savour of godliness. The moderator, who preached the opening sermon, seemed to feel that he was a dying man preaching to dying men. He dwelt much upon the responsibility of the Christian ministry, and the encouragement they had to labor for Christ. All the business of the synod seemed to be conducted under the influence of a solemn sense of responsibility to the great Head of the Church. I could not but feel that the members all went home with the full purpose of throwing themselves, with all that they had, upon the altar, and laboring with a more untiring zeal in the work of the Lord. These were the resolutions with which I left that meeting, and my journey home was a season of self-examination and of prayer for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit, and for the blessing of God upon my dying people.

In a short time after my return, as one of our pious young men was reading a chapter in the Bible to a number of children who were assembled on Sabbath afternoon, for religious instruction, they became so impressed with the

simple reading of the word of God, that many of them were weeping, before the chapter was ended, and they all seemed deeply convinced of their lost and perishing condition. This was the visible commencement of a work of grace which spread through our whole congregation. We were soon obliged to have meetings for prayer and conversation every night, when there was not regular preaching; and often at the close of our religious meetings, which were not held later than nine o'clock, a few of our young men would assemble at one of their offices or counting houses, and remain in prayer most of the night. For some time the whole moral power of the sacramental host seemed to be brought into requisition, and to bear with its whole weight upon the ranks of the impenitent. Religion was the universal theme of conversation among the righteous and the wicked, and whenever two or three Christians would meet together casually, or on business, they would not part until they had a season of prayer. There was no visible opposition to the work, all seemed convinced that it was of God, and to feel that it would be a fearful thing to be found fight-

ing against him. Two or three left the place to get rid of the importunity of their Christian friends, and to be away from the atmosphere of religion.

On the first communion after the commencement of this precious work, one hundred and forty-four persons stood up in the sanctuary and avouched Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as the God, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, of their undying souls. The season was one of overwhelming interest—it was a season of communion with Christ, and with a great company of redeemed souls, who had been recently brought into his kingdom. The young converts were rejoicing in the freshness of their first love, while older saints were sympathizing with the angels around the throne of God over those who had recently been brought to repentance.

After the administration of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Christ, the communicants, with one accord, besought me to repeat the ordinance the next Sabbath, which I consented to do upon the condition that they would devote the whole week to prayer and labor for the salvation of those

who yet remained impenitent. In the course of that week there were about seventy who indulged hopes, and on the Sabbath following about fifty more added to the church. The ordinance was repeated a third time, and, according to my present recollections, thirty more were added to the church.

At the close of this blessed work, there were more than eight hundred communicants, and only eighteen adults who did not indulge a hope in Christ, in a congregation where fourteen years previous there were only twelve credible professors of religion.

This revival I have always considered as one of the answers to the prayers of that synod, and one of the blessings which resulted from the influence of that meeting. And ought not some such manifestation of the saving power of God be expected, when so many of the servants of the Lord come together on such an occasion? God has not said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye me in vain." He is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God, and should we not always hope that when a whole synod is convened for prayer and other religious services, rivers



of salvation will flow from their faithful efforts and believing prayers? If we would ask more and expect more, we would receive more from the Lord. He is not impoverished by giving, nor enriched by withholding. His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, nor his arm shortened that it cannot save. He is the same now that He was when in answer to the prayers of one hundred and twenty disciples, assembled in an upper room at Jerusalem, three thousand were converted in one day and five thousand a few days subsequent. "When Zion travails she shall bring forth."

## A REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

IN 1829 I was invited by the pastor of a church in a village about twenty miles from my own parish, to come out and assist him for a few days in a special effort for the salvation of his people. He thought there were indications for good in his congregation, and had made up his mind to have preaching every evening, together with prayer-meetings and family visiting through the day.

I took one of my elders with me, and went to the house of my brother, agreeably to his request. He had made an appointment for me to preach that evening. The congregation was large and solemn, and there were some indications of the special presence of the Holy Spirit. That evening my elder lead our devotions in family prayer, and poured out his soul in great fervency for the conversion of sinners. He earnestly besought the Lord that he would so trouble the impenitent that they would feel constrained to awaken us in the night to inquire what they should do to be saved.

After prayer we retired to rest, but about midnight the pastor came into our room and awoke us, to tell us that a number of sinners had collected at the academy, who were so distressed with a sense of their lost condition, that they had sent a request for us to visit them. On repairing to the place, the pastor and my elder, for I was not well enough to go out at that hour, found the principal of the academy, with a large number of the scholars, and some other persons, assembled to inquire what they must do to be saved. The next morning there were a number rejoicing in hope, and many more deeply bowed down under a sense of their sins. We remained there a few days, and had the pleasure of seeing many proud hearts apparently humbled at the foot of the Cross.

It was the Lord who taught my brother thus to pray, and it was the Lord who answered that prayer by giving us the very thing prayed for. If Christians lived in habits of communion with God, would not his Spirit more frequently teach us what to pray for, and more frequently give us the very blessings which we ask ?

A WAY TO KEEP THE OVERSIGHT OF A LARGE  
CHURCH.

HAVING often heard my brethren in the ministry complain of the difficulty of extending a proper pastoral supervision over a large church, I thought it might be useful to young pastors for me to give them the results of my own experience on this subject.

When believers began to be multiplied in my congregation, so that my church consisted of several hundred persons scattered over an area of six or eight miles square, I found the difficulty of extending a personal watch and care over them to be so great that I resorted to the following expedient.

We divided the congregation into districts of a convenient size. Over each of these districts we appointed an elder, as a superintendent. This elder was furnished with a book, containing the names of all the members of the church who resided within the bounds of his particular jurisdiction. He was told that this portion of the church and

congregation was committed to his special care, and that he must keep himself acquainted with the spiritual condition of each one thus committed to him. He was directed to keep up a prayer-meeting among his people, to visit them often, and if there were any difficulties arising among them which he could not settle, or any cases of awakening among the impenitent, he was immediately to notify the pastor. I would visit these districts as frequently as I could, giving notice on the Sabbath of the time when, and appointing a lecture at some convenient place in the neighborhood.

After the lecture I would call for the superintendent's book, in which I would find written opposite the name of each individual all that I needed to know to enable me to give him such private counsel or admonition as his case required.

After conversing personally with each one, and praying, and singing, the meeting was dismissed, and I then gave such advice to the superintendent as I thought the condition of his little charge required.

In this way I was enabled to keep myself constantly advised of the spiritual condition

and religious walk of a church consisting of sometimes eight hundred members. Kept in communication with each other, they could feel the beating of each other's hearts, and maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

In all the discipline which we ever had in that church, for more than thirty years, we never had either an appeal or complaint; and in almost every instance the session retained the confidence and the affection of those who were the subjects of its highest censures.

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THE LITTLE BOY'S REMEDY WHEN HE GOT IN  
THE DARK.

In my congregation, during a precious work of grace, there was a little boy of eight years old, who was among those who indulged a hope in Christ. Conversing with him in regard to his religious exercises I inquired if he never got in the dark, and became afraid that he was not a Christian.



He replied, "O, yes ; very often."

"Well, George, what do you do at such times ?"

"Why, sir, I go to Christ and submit over again, and then I find comfort."

The little boy gave such evidence of a change of heart, that we received him into the church, but his parents soon removed into Michigan, and I did not hear from him in six years, when a man from the neighborhood where he lived gave us the following account :

The family settled in a new place, where there was no preaching, and no stated religious service of any kind. When George was fourteen years of age, he went through the settlement, and by the consent of the parents, collected the children into a Sabbath school, of which he was for a while superintendent and teacher, yet the school grew and prospered, and was the means of establishing the ordinances of the gospel in that place.

I have often thought of this child's remedy for spiritual darkness. It is the true one. When the Christian finds his graces fading, and his light going out ; instead of examining long to determine whether he was ever truly a

child of God, if he would go directly to the Saviour, and do again his first work, he would, like that little boy, obtain comfort. The blessed Redeemer is the only friend who can help us, in such a time of need. His blood cleanses from all sin, and it is by continual submission to and reliance on him, that the soul can have the consolations of his holy religion.

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THE INFLUENCE OF RUMSELLING UPON THE HEART  
AND CONSCIENCE.

IN a country town in the State of New York, which I visited twenty years ago, I found an old acquaintance, who had for a number of years been a member of the Presbyterian church. I had been acquainted with him from his early youth, and particularly attached both to him and his companion, who was also a professor of religion. To my grief I found them engaged in keeping a rum tavern. I conversed with them about their business, and found that the consciences of both were burthened. The

wife had been opposed to it in her judgment as well as conscience, and the husband told me that he did not enjoy himself as he had done before he began to sell rum. I endeavored to show them that the business was inconsistent with the religion which they professed, and might be a snare both to themselves and their children—that the profits which they might realize from it would be the wages of unrighteousness, which would shut them out from the communion of God, and pierce their souls with many sorrows. I finally prevailed in persuading them to abandon the traffic, and with my own hands assisted them in throwing a part of their liquor into the street, and mixing the residue with water to make vinegar.

They both seemed happy after the expurgation, and I could not help feeling thankful to God for my success, in persuading two friends whom I loved, to abandon a course of life which was dangerous to their own souls, and ruinous both to the souls and bodies of others.

A short time afterwards I visited them again, and, to my pain, found that soon after my first visit the husband had replenished his

bar, and engaged with a new energy in his work of death.

In my subsequent visits to this family, I found both the husband and wife beginning to find fault with Christians, and to entertain doubts about the divinity of the Christian system. They soon became open infidels, and have brought up their children to despise religion, and glory in their emancipation from the restraint which the Bible imposes upon the followers of the Saviour.

I am satisfied that the dreadful fall of these two interesting people, will be found, in the last day, to have been occasioned by their going contrary to the dictates of their own enlightened consciences, in the sale of the drunkard's drink. They knew that the Bible condemned their course, and when they were induced to resume a business which they had so recently been prevailed on to abandon, they determined to get rid of their fears of the displeasure of God by rejecting the standard of morality which he had given them. The love of the wages of unrighteousness hardened their hearts, and blunted their minds, until they were ready to withdraw the wholesome

and needed restraints of religion from the minds of their children, and teach them, both by their precept and example, to live without God in the world. O, what a fearful responsibility! What a meeting will that of these parents and children be in the day of judgment! The father and mother are now among the most bitter enemies of Christianity and their children are walking in the footsteps of their parents.

Christian reader, if you should ever be tempted to deal in the drunkard's drink, think of this family. The business is inconsistent with the religion of Jesus Christ, and you must avoid the one or give up the other. Count the cost before you take the fatal step, and if you are not ready to deny your God and Saviour, and expose your offspring to the curse of infidelity, have nothing to do with this work of death.

## THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

IN John vii. 38, we have the following precious promise—"He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

In this passage water is the emblem of the salvation of Christ, and the promise, when divested of its figurative dress, is, that when we exercise a living faith in Christ salvation will flow from us in broad streams like rivers.

I have often dwelt with pleasure upon this sweet promise, and have seen it fulfilled, in the providence and grace of God, but have never witnessed a more delightful exemplification of its truthfulness than in the case of an old man, who lived and died in my congregation. He had a very numerous family when he came to Christ, and received the waters of life, or, according to the figurative language of the preceding verse, came to Christ to drink. Very soon, in answer to his prayers, and through the blessings of the Lord upon his judicious labors his wife and five sons, and five daughters, were



brought to indulge a hope in the Redeemer. The oldest son had three boys, who lived to be men and were all Christians; one of them is now a devoted minister of the gospel, who is turning many to righteousness. The second son died soon after his conversion, and as he lived at a distance from me I am unable to trace his history. The third son, though a feeble young man, was an active Christian, and though he was laid in an early grave, I know of many individuals who owned him as their spiritual father. The fourth son had two children, who were both members of the church. Though I am unable to trace the particular history of the other children, from what I know of the family, it would be safe to say that each of the ten streams, issuing from the pious efforts of this old man, doubled in the next generation, while some of them, in the life-time of their parents, became a broad river. Now, if we were capable of following these streams, as they flow on from generation to generation, we should find them widening and deepening, until they should not only become broad rivers but inland seas, losing themselves in the ocean of redeemed souls, who will fill the area

of glory at the right hand of the Saviour at the judgment of the great day.

I have only in this estimate noticed the success of this old man in his own family, but it did not stop here. He lived to a good old age, and while he lived was a burning and shining light to all around him, and was, through every year of his Christian life, a means of turning some souls to Christ.

Reader, the man whose history I have so far traced, was a plain man, of no more than ordinary talents and common education. There is no reason why you should not emulate his example, and hope for his success. Jesus Christ has given you the same promise which he gave to him, and he will accompany your efforts, if you will make them in faith and love, with the same spirit which made him mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Dwell on the gracious promise of your Redeemer, until you shall feel your heart beaming with love to him, and to the souls of men, and then, with a reliance on his grace to help you in every time of need, labor for the salvation of sinners, always remembering that every one that you may lead to the

foot of the Cross, will be the commencement of a stream of saving influences, which will flow on, bearing souls upon its current down to the close of time.

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BRIEF ACCOUNT OF A WORK OF GRACE IN THE  
BRICK CHURCH IN ROCHESTER.

The writer commenced his labors with the Brick church at Rochester in the spring of 1831, at the close of a powerful revival of religion, under the preaching of Rev. C. G. Finney, which pervaded, in a greater or less degree, all the religious congregations in that place.

From the time of my installation, in May, 1831, until the first Sabbath in January, 1833, there was in this congregation a manifest, though not a powerful work of grace, and constant though small additions were made to the church, of such as we had reason to hope would be saved. Between these two periods about two hundred and fifty souls were added to our

communion, the most of them by profession of their faith.

In January, 1833, the work assumed a deeper and more encouraging aspect. The people of God began to take a stronger hold upon the promises, and to agonize more in prayer for the conversion of the thousands who were perishing around them.

A protracted meeting in the free church, and a union in the third, were productive of great good, and I have no doubt many souls were converted to Christ. These efforts were followed in February by a protracted meeting in the Baptist church, which was conducted with a catholic spirit, and appeared to be blessed to the salvation of a goodly number.

The first week in March was spent by the Brick church, and by a few brethren from other churches, as an entire week of prayer for the salvation of Rochester. The Monday following was kept as a day of fasting and humiliation before God. Tuesday and Wednesday were spent in prayer and preaching, by the members of Rochester Presbytery, and we had reason to hope that a few sinners were converted to Christ.

On Thursday, the 14th of March, we commenced having a prayer-meeting, and a meeting of enquiry in the forenoon, and preaching in the afternoon and evening, and the Spirit of God seemed to accompany the efforts. In the course of a few days, an aspect of seriousness had spread over the whole place, and many were inquiring what they must do to be saved. Our meetings of inquiry were attended by great numbers, and our house was so crowded in the afternoon and evening, that, during the sermon, the whole church had to go into the basement rooms, and spend the time in prayer, to make room for the impenitent who wished to listen to the preaching.

By the first of April the work became less powerful, and though there were still a number of conversions every day, yet the revival was evidently on the decline. The preparation for the opening of navigation seemed to divert the minds of men from the one thing needful, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and lusts of other things, checked the word, so that it became comparatively unfruitful.

Between the first Sabbath in March and the



first Sabbath in May, there were about six hundred souls who attended our meeting, exclusive of children, indulging a hope that they had been born again. Of this number, one hundred and eighty were added to our church, while many went to the churches where they had statedly worshipped previous to their conversion.

The converts were of all classes, and were not all residents of the city; many from the surrounding country came in, to see what the Lord was doing for Rochester, and gladly received the word, and returned home to serve and glorify God. Numbers, too, who were journeying through the place, heard the word and believed, and like the eunuch of old, went on their way rejoicing.

The instruction was substantially the same as had been given to that congregation for the two years preceding. Christians were taught that the salvation of sinners must come out of Zion—that revivals of religion did not depend upon the eloquence of the preacher, nor upon any system of measures, but upon the truths of God, faithfully proclaimed and sent home to the heart by the Holy Ghost. The encour-



aging promise, that "When Zion travails she shall bring forth children," was kept prominently before the people of God, while the necessity of the church arising from its low attainments, and occupying the ground trodden by the Enochs and Elijahs of the old dispensation, and the apostles and primitive martyrs of the new, was urged as indispensable to the bringing in of the latter day glory.

Sinners were taught that they were rebels against God, under his wrath and curse—that they were condemned already, and liable any moment to be sent down to hell; but that the Almighty had provided a Saviour for their lost souls, and was, through the gospel ministry, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. They were told that the conditions of reconciliation were submission to God, repentance for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That though these were all graces of the Spirit, yet they were exercises of the creatures, which he was free to put forth, and that he had not only the ability, but was under infinite obligation to comply with them immediately.

These were the prominent topics of discus-

sion through this work of grace—Christ crucified for our offences, and raised again for our justification, was endeavored to be kept constantly before the mind.

The young converts were, as far as possible, assembled two or three times a week, and sometimes every day, in a room by themselves, to be examined by their pastor in regard to the ground of their hope, and to be instructed in the way of salvation.

The Sabbath-school of our church assumed a most interesting appearance. The faithful superintendent and his indefatigable teachers had long been sowing the precious seed of the word in the infantile mind, with tears, and they were now returning with joy, bringing their sheaves with them. This school was, as a Sabbath-school should always be, a place where the thoughtless were led to consider their lost and perishing condition, the young inquirer pointed to a bleeding Saviour, and the converted little one taught the duty of presenting his body a living sacrifice unto the Lord. The superintendent felt his responsibility to God for the souls committed to his care, while each teacher was taught to carry

the souls of his class on his heart, and to labor and pray for them, as one who must give an account. Out of one hundred and ninety-five children belonging to this school, more than one hundred were indulging a hope in Christ, and many more were deeply impressed with a sense of their lost condition.

In closing this brief account, which I have given of this work of grace, I will take the liberty to inquire of the Christian reader, whether something more than what is doing, may not, and must not, be done by the ministry of reconciliation, and by our churches, to bring a deeper work of grace into the hearts of Christians, and to cause the gospel to have free course, that it may be glorified in the salvation of millions, instead of hundreds and thousands of our fellow race? At the rate that salvation is now flowing "out of Zion," it requires but a moment's calculation to perceive that the millenium can never be ushered in. With all our revivals, and with all that is doing in our own favored land, the moral desolations are thickening around us. The increase of population is so far outstripping the work of regeneration by the Spirit that the moral

darkness is becoming more and more dense every day. Even where the gospel is enjoyed statedly, it is, from some cause, attended with so little success, that in the aggregate there are far more born after the flesh than are renewed by the Spirit; thus sending out a continuous stream of the impenitent enemies of God, to co-operate with the formalists and the infidels, who are pouring in upon us from the old world, in weaving the winding sheet of our republican and Christian institutions.

Look at these things, my brethren, and then say, if there is any reasonable hope that the world will ever be converted, without a radical reformation in the house of God. I do not speak of a reformation in the forms of religion, or in the organization of the churches, nor yet in the doctrines enshrined in our creed, but in the hearts and lives of the sacramental host. Christians must have more of that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." They must have a more intense desire, and agonize more in prayer, for the salvation of dying men. Instead of disputing about those little peculiarities in our speculative the-

ology, or in the forms of our administrations, which do not enter into the spiritual elements of the Christian character; they must come together in the unity of faith and of an experimental knowledge of the Son of God, and must sit together in heavenly places, and speak to each other of the things which they have seen and heard, and which their hands have handled of the good word of life. Being united to Jesus Christ by a living faith, they must, in the language of our Scriptural confession, have fellowship with him in his graces, suffering, death, resurrection and glory; and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's graces and gifts, and in this way have communicated to them in this life, the first fruits of glory with Christ, as members of him, their head; and in him become interested in that glory, of which He is fully possessed; and so enjoy a sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of eternal glory.

This, my brethren, is not only the imperative duty, but the glorious privilege of the people of God, and until the Church shall arise and take possession of this, their spiritual inheri-



tance, there can be no great encroachments made upon the kingdom of Satan. Before the world can be converted, we must have a holy and heavenly-minded church, as the standard to which the world must be brought. But if we have a holy church she must have a heavenly-minded ministry—we who minister at the altar must be conformed to the inimitable perfections of our blessed Saviour, that we may call upon our people, as Paul did, to follow us as we follow Christ.

O, how crushing are the responsibilities of the Christian ministry! How fearful the results of their labors! The glory of God, the heavenly-mindedness of the Church, the salvation of lost souls, the joy of angels, and the wailings of the damned, stand intimately connected with their success, and that success depends, under God, more upon their personal holiness than upon any other one thing.

Let us then, my brethren, who minister in the sacred office, keep Jesus so fully in our hearts, that when we mingle with our people, that while they behold they may be changed into the same image from glory to glory. Let the high and holy attainments of prophets



and apostles, stimulate and encourage our faith, and while the higher and purer character of the Captain of our salvation is our model, let us depend on his grace to help us throw ourselves upon our work of faith and labor of love.

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#### HE THAT WATERETH SHALL BE WATERED.

THE writer of these reminiscences was called to take the pastoral charge of a congregation that was fourteen thousand dollars in debt, with their church edifice very much out of repair, and with some very unpleasant divisions and heartburnings among the members of the church.

At the first monthly concert after he commenced his labors in this new field, though there was a pretty good attendance, to his grief and disappointment, only seventeen dollars were contributed for the furtherance of the noble cause which had brought them

together. He took an early opportunity the next morning to get two or three of the leading members of his church together, to whom he stated his feelings, in view of the smallness of the collection on the preceding evening. He felt that though a rich congregation might afford to be penurious, a poor one could not, and that the only hope for the one of which he had just taken the charge was in the promise, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."—Prov. xi. 25.

The brethren with whom he conversed sympathized with him in these views, and set themselves to work, and before night added sixty-four dollars to the contribution of the preceding evening. From that time to the dissolution of the pastoral relation between us, which was four years, the collections at the monthly concert averaged over fifty dollars, and the whole amount contributed for the different benevolent enterprises of the day averaged four thousand dollars a year, over and above what was done for liquidating their debt, repairing and furnishing their house, and supporting the gospel at home.

In the meantime the Spirit of God was gra-

ciously shed down upon the congregation: the misguided individuals, who had made the trouble, were reclaimed, and brought to repentance, and the church was built up in its most holy faith. At the end of the fourth year the pastor, in the hope of restoring his declining health, was released from his charge, but the church went on from strength to strength, and so enlarged in its benefactions, that in eleven years from the concert alluded to, it had contributed to the great benevolent societies of the land more than fifty-five thousand dollars, and had been so prospered of God, that it was entirely free from debt, had its place of worship in repair, and from one to two hundred dollars were unappropriated in the treasury. It is at this day one of the most prosperous, active and efficient congregations in Western New York, and furnishes an instance of the fulfillment of that sweet promise which I have placed at the head of this article, well calculated to encourage the people of God to make liberal efforts for the salvation of a dying world.

Here let me inquire, whether the poverty of many of our churches, and their difficulty in supporting the institutions of religion at home,

may not be owing to the parsimonious manner in which they contribute to send the word of life to those who are perishing for lack of vision? They sow sparingly, and according to the divine arrangement, they reap sparingly. They withhold more than is meet from the treasury of the Lord, and "it tendeth to poverty."

Israel of old tried the experiment of getting rich by robbing God of his tythes and offerings; but He sent blasting and mildew into their fields, caused their vines prematurely to cast their fruit, while the palmer worm devoured the product of their olive yards and fig trees. The prophet Malachi was sent to this people to tell them that the Almighty had cursed them with this curse, for robbing him. And that if they would prove him, and bring all the tythes into the storehouse, He would open the windows of heaven, and pour them out a blessing that there should not be room to receive it. That He would rebuke the devourer, for their sakes, so that it should not destroy the fruits of the ground, and that the vine should no more cast her fruit before the time.

The church of which I have been speaking, proved the Lord in the way in which He told Israel to prove him, and they have never since had occasion to complain of poverty.

Will not all our churches, and all individual Christians, inquire whether they are not chargeable with the sin of robbing God, by withholding, in whole or in part, their tythes and offerings.

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THE YOUNG GIRL'S ASSURANCE OF THE ANSWER  
TO HER PRAYERS.

DURING the residence of the writer in the western part of Pennsylvania, he became acquainted with a family of devoted piety, who had a daughter that from her childhood was remarkable for her heavenly-mindedness. She seemed in an eminent degree to walk with God, and had the evidence in her own soul that she pleased him. When she was about twelve or thirteen years old, she was attacked with rheumatism, which continued to grow worse

and worse, until she was not only unable to walk, but had her lower limbs so contracted that her knees were brought up almost to her stomach. She was confined for a long time to her bed, but found a rich consolation in religion, and suffered meekly and quietly, upon the consideration that it was her heavenly Father who, in goodness, had afflicted her. When she was about fifteen or sixteen years of age, on one Sabbath morning, she said to her mother, she wished her uncle, who was the pastor of that church, would appoint a prayer-meeting at their house. The meeting was accordingly appointed. Towards evening the daughter called her mother to her bed, and told her that the Lord had heard her prayers, and that evening was going to remove her disease, and restore her to health again. Though there were no indications of any improvement in the contracted state of her limbs, she requested to have her clothes put on her, so that she might get up and attend the prayer-meeting. Her mother, according to her request, dressed her, even to her shoes and stockings, wondering at the strange impressions of her beloved child.



Evening came, and the people assembled, and the pastor, at the appointed hour, opened the meeting with an appropriate prayer, when, to the astonishment of all, the contracted muscles of the daughter's limbs relaxed, and she arose from her bed and sat up through the rest of the meeting, and was never after troubled with that complaint.

As near as I can now remember, about two years after this miraculous interposition of God, I was at the house of the father of this young girl, and by the consent of her parents, she accompanied me home, to make us a visit of a week or two ; but she had only been with us two or three days, when she told us she must go home. On our urging her to stay and make out her visit, she replied that she must go. Finding her determined on the subject, I engaged her passage in the stage, which went by her father's house, and put her on board.

When she arrived at home, she told her mother that they must soon part, that it was the will of her heavenly Father that she should leave her earthly friends, and go to dwell with her precious Saviour. Though she was then in perfect health, she set immediately

about dividing her clothes, and other things which she possessed, and gave her mother directions how she would have them disposed of.

As soon as she had made these little arrangements she was taken sick, and in a few days fell asleep in Christ.

This was one of those rare cases in which the Lord, in some way, to us unknown, reveals to his children what He is about to do.

She was first informed of his gracious purpose to restore her to health, in answer to her prayers, and when she had done what He had for her to do, He kindly admonished her of his intention to call her home.

With the philosophy of this case I have nothing to do, but the facts themselves I love to contemplate. They belong to a class of the providential dealings of God with his children, which are calculated to warm our hearts, and quicken our faith, and encourage us to live near to God, and be more in habits of communion with him. "The secrets of the Lord are with the righteous."—Prov. iii. 32. And we have much reason to believe, that if his people would come nearer to him, such cases as this

would be much more common than they now are.

A similar instance of the assurance of the answer of prayer, occurred when the Albion was wrecked off the coast of Ireland. The writer was in New York when the news arrived that the ill-fated packet was lost, and that every passenger on board had perished. A minister of the gospel residing near Philadelphia, received a paper which contained a list of the lost, and finding among them the name of one of the members of his congregation, went immediately to the wife to inform her of the death of her husband. But to his perfect astonishment, after informing her of the shipwreck, and showing her the names of those who had perished, she told him there was some mistake; her husband had been in great peril, but was not dead. The next account that was received from the wreck, confirmed the impression of the wife, that though her husband was on board, and was in great peril, he alone of all the passengers was saved.

The writer received these facts from the late Rev. Dr. Wilson, who had all the particulars from the pastor who bore the intelligence

of the wreck of the Albion to the wife whose husband was saved from imminent danger in answer to her believing prayers.

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#### ALMOST PERSUADED TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

IN the course of my family visiting among the people of my charge I called on a young married woman who had just been brought home by a young man belonging to my congregation.

I immediately entered into conversation with her about the state of her own soul, and soon found that though she was a speculative believer in divine revelation, and had always been regular in her attendance upon the means of grace, yet the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, had choked the word, and made it unfruitful.

I urged her, as she was just now entering upon the duties and responsibilities of a wife, to prepare for her station by putting herself

under the care, and seeking the guidance and direction of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

She acknowledged the importance of such a step, but thought she should be better prepared to take it after she became settled in her new habitation.

I told her that though she was then young, and her prospects for a long and happy life might appear fair; yet her time was in the hands of that God whom she had from her childhood refused to serve, and that He might unexpectedly require her soul which he had made.

She seemed to feel the truth of what I said, and wept bitterly. She saw her duty and her danger, and sometimes, for a moment, would seem near to the kingdom of God; but presently the world, with its flattering promises, would rush into her mind, and then she felt that she could not give all up for Christ.

I pointed her to the dying love of her Saviour, to the guilt of again neglecting him, and to the danger of her own soul while living without hope in the world; but while her tears flowed profusely, her heart led her to

say, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

I left her and returned home, and saw her no more until I was called out of my bed one morning at the break of day, to go and see Mrs. —, who, the messenger said, was very sick. On entering her apartment I found her dying. I approached her bed and inquired whether she felt prepared to meet her Saviour; but with a look of unutterable anguish, and with a voice that went to my heart, she exclaimed, "O, no! O, no!" and with a terrible struggle, groaned out her last breath.

The bridal robe and the winding-sheet often come in quick succession; and she only is wise, who adorns herself in the white raiment prepared by Christ, before she gives her heart to another. The present moment is God's accepted time, and those who refuse the offer of life when it is made to them, are in danger of mourning at the last, with "no God to hear their bitter prayer, nor Saviour to call them to the skies."



## SINNERS LIVE TO NO GOOD PURPOSE.

AN intelligent and interesting physician of strictly moral habits, called upon me one morning in my study, and told me he had come to have a little conversation on the subject of religion. I told him I was always pleased to see him, but was peculiarly so when I knew that he wished to converse upon the things which belonged to his peace. On making some inquiry respecting his feelings, I learned that he had been sick; had considered himself, and was considered by his attendant physician, for some days, to be in a critical state, but, by the blessing of God upon the means used, he was soon able to be about again. During his sickness he had no particular anxiety about himself; but when he was able to return to his office, while entirely alone, the inquiry came up to his mind, "What good purpose will be answered by your restoration to health?" This question, which seemed to come without inviting, brought his whole past life up before him, which, though it had been

orderly, and what the world calls moral, he saw had been a life without God, and that his fellow men had been none the better for his having lived among them. He felt that there was no portion of his past life which would afford him pleasure in the hour of death, and that if what remained of it was to be spent as the past had been, he might as well have died with his last sickness as to have been restored to health again. This train of thought, which was evidently caused by the operation of the Holy Spirit, convicted him of sin. He saw clearly that if his life had been a useless one, it had been a sinful one; that in the language of our excellent catechism, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever," and as he had not made that the chief end of his life, he had not fulfilled the end of his being, and was an unfaithful cumberer of the ground in his Master's vineyard. His heart now became burdened with a sense of his guilt, and in the loneliness of his study he resolved to take the yoke of his Redeemer upon his neck, and learn of him who was meek and lowly in mind. He then knelt before God, and consecrated himself with all that he

had to the service of that Saviour who came into the world to redeem sinners.

I questioned him with regard to his view of the sinfulness of his heart, the character of Christ, the ground of his hope, and the feelings which he had indulged since the change of his purpose, until I became satisfied that there was ground to hope that "old things had passed away, and all things had become new."

After some weeks he united himself to the church, and his subsequent life has fully justified the hope which I indulged for him at the interview to which I have alluded.

It is the province of the Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance our past life; and oftentimes, when we are alone with God, He leads us to a course of self-inspection, which results in the deepest sense of our guilt and ruin. But in this case I think it was a mother's prayer that availed with God for this young man. He was blessed with a godly mother, who, though she was far from the son of her love, was not far from the throne of grace; and never forgot to plead the promises of a covenant-keeping God for her baptized child. Oh! what an inestimable blessing is a godly

mother! One who can take hold of the throne of God with one hand, and of her beloved child with the other. Such a mother often, by her prayers, "moves the arm that moves the world."

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#### A UNIVERSALIST AWAKENED BY A KING FISHER.

WHEN the writer first came to this western part of the State of New York, there was living in a beautiful village on the bank of the Chemung river, a respectable physician, who was an Universalist. He prided himself in his universal sentiments, and took the license which his creed afforded him of gratifying the lusts and appetites of his flesh. It was not uncommon at that early period, in Western New York, for respectable men sometimes to indulge themselves, when in good company, in a free use of the intoxicating cup. Just after one of these excesses, the Doctor, in returning home, fell off the river bank, and injured himself so severely, that he was confined to his bed for

several weeks. His house was situated near the river, and the room in which he was confined looked out upon that beautiful stream. The KING FISHER, a little bird which lives on small fish, and makes his nest in deep holes in the river bank, was numerous in that place. The Doctor, still on his bed, had his attention aroused by an uncommon screaming among those birds. On raising himself on his elbow, and looking out of the window, he saw that the river had been swollen by a recent rain to such a degree, that it was running into the holes which had been made in the banks, and drowning out the little birds. This view of their discomfiture and peril brought to his mind the words of the prophet: "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow their hiding places." This text the Spirit of God applied to his own case, and he saw clearly that in resorting to Universalism, he had been making lies his refuge, and hiding himself under falsehood; and that when God should bring judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, the hail would sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters would overflow his hiding place.

The word of God which he had so long neglected, was now made "quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He saw clearly that he had rejected the truth because his deeds were evil; and had adopted his lax creed to screen himself from the reproaches of a guilty conscience. His pillow was now planted with thorns, and his bed became a bed of anguish. The crying of the houseless birds rang in his ears like the knell of his lost soul, and he could find no rest until he had fled for refuge to that sure foundation which God has laid in Zion.

When he was able to walk abroad, he called on the writer and gave him the interesting account recorded above. He described the manner in which the threatening from Isaiah was brought home to his heart, and gave a detailed account of the operations of his mind from that moment, until he found rest for his soul.

He subsequently became a member of the



Presbyterian church, and spent the residue of his life in her communion.

From a very extensive and long acquaintance with Universalists, from conversation with them when the Spirit of God has been striving with their consciences, and from visiting them on their death-bed, I am fully satisfied that as the fool hath said in his *heart* there is no God ; so it is the heart, and not the understanding, which leads men to believe or *profess* the universal doctrines. It seems to me improbable, that any unprejudiced mind can believe that when the Saviour said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," he meant that both classes should go to the same place ; or that when he said that "the day was coming when all who were in their graves should come forth, they who had done good unto the resurrection of life, and they who had done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," he meant to be understood, that they should all be alike happy. It is a deluded heart which leads them astray. Because they receive not THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH that they might be saved. \* \* \*

God sends them strong delusions that they

should believe a lie ; that they all might be damned who believe not in the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

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#### FATAL ADVICE.

IN the winter of 1826, a gay and thoughtless girl from the city of New York came to reside in our village ; and, as her parents were members of my congregation, she came under my pastoral charge.

Soon after the arrival of the stranger, there was more than ordinary attention among my people, and she seemed to partake of the general seriousness that pervaded the circle in which she moved.

On visiting her at the house of her parents, I found her deeply impressed with a sense of her danger, but not so clearly perceiving the aggravated nature of her sins, as I could have wished. She was an only daughter, and a petted child ; and her mother had the mistaken impression, that her favorite was almost

what she should be, and the child had very naturally fallen in with the opinion of her parent.

She soon became an attendant upon my meetings for conversation, and often made the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

In all my instruction I endeavored to deepen her sense of guilt, and to show her that there was no help for such a sinner, but in Christ; and that the only way to avail herself of his aid, was by repentance and faith. Under this instruction she became more rationally and feelingly convinced of her lost and perishing condition; and I began to hope that she was not far from the kingdom of God. But while she was in this state of mind, she was visited by a very good young man, who, finding her much distressed, and exceedingly anxious to know what to do to obtain comfort, told her, "she must pray to God to forgive her sins, and He who heard the young ravens when they cried would hear her."

The young brother called soon after to see me, and frankly told me that he had been to see C——, and had advised her to pray.

"What," said I, "did you tell her to pray before she gave up her opposition to God?"

"Yes, I told her to pray, that God-would forgive her sins, and have mercy upon her."

"And where, my dear brother, do you find any warrant in the Scriptures for such advice to an awakened sinner?"

"Does not the apostle say that he 'will that men pray everywhere'?"

"Yes, but he adds in the same verse, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. The prayer which the Apostle recommends is that which flows from a benevolent heart, and is offered up in faith."

"Well, did not Peter advise Simon to pray, that the thoughts of his wicked heart might be forgiven him?"

"Yes he did, but he told him to repent first of his great sin. This is my objection to your advice, you did not tell her to repent first, or believe first, but to pray while her heart was rankling with enmity against God. She has been wanting to do something beside repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am afraid you have supplied this want to the injury of her soul!"

"But do you never tell an impenitent sinner to pray?"

"Yes, very often, and show them their guilt for neglecting prayer, but I at the same time endeavor to show them, that to approach God in any other way than through faith in Christ, will only add insult to guilt. Jesus said when he was on earth, "No man cometh to the Father but through me," and for us to encourage sinners to offer up prayer in any other name, or without faith in Him is only leading them out of the way of life."

The young brother seemed to perceive his error, but was a little relieved in his feelings, when he learned that the young woman had found relief in the prayer which she had offered and was full of joy.

My own fears were not allayed by this change. I rather expected it, and trembled for the issue. I thought I knew something of her temperament, and of her bad instruction, and was afraid she would rest on her prayers instead of Christ.

She appeared joyful and happy a few weeks, and I began almost to hope, that my fears were groundless; but as soon as the excitement

occasioned by the novelty of her position had passed away, her interest in religious things began to decline, and she soon returned like "the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Though we made frequent efforts to bring her back to a sense of her lost condition, they were without effect, and she lived and died, without giving any satisfactory evidence of repentance toward God, or faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may seem strange to some, that I should consider such advice dangerous to the soul of an impenitent sinner; but all my experience with awakened persons, has gone to establish me in the opinion, that to set them at doing any thing before they come to Christ, is dangerous. The more they can be shut up to to repentance and faith, the better. Setting them to work does not usually do the mischief that it did in this instance; but it is because the Holy Spirit convinces them that our advice falls short of their necessities; and brings them to do at last, what we should have told them to do at first; repent and believe. The awakened sinner will cry unto God; no one



can prevent him ; but when we set him at it, as a means of grace, we add our influence to the self-righteousness of his own heart, and increase the danger of his resting in his impenitent doings, instead of throwing himself at the foot of the Cross. I never tell a sinner not to pray ; but I always endeavor to show him that God out of Christ is a consuming fire.

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#### THE WOMAN WHO HAD NO FEELING.

At a time when the Lord was pouring out his Spirit upon my congregation, I observed one morning, in my meeting of inquiry, a young lady, who was not in the habit of attending my church. I sat down by her, and told her I was happy to meet her in that place, and hoped she had come to inquire the way to her Saviour.

She replied, "I have no particular anxiety about myself. I came here this morning to

gratify a friend, who was very anxious that I should accompany her to your meeting."

"But how is it, my dear girl, that you have no anxiety about yourself; do you not know that you are a lost sinner?"

"O yes, I know I am a sinner, and I know, too, that if I do not become a Christian I must perish; but some how, I cannot feel any particular anxiety about my situation."

"Do you not know that Jesus Christ is just such a Saviour as you stand in need of; and that he has been waiting long, and is waiting this morning, to save your guilty soul from condemnation and eternal ruin?"

"Yes, I know it, but what can I do without feeling?"

"You can act like a rational and accountable being, with whom God has a controversy, and to whom He is making overtures of mercy. You can contemplate your lost condition, and look at the terms upon which Jesus Christ will interpose in your behalf."

"But I have always understood that we must be awakened and convicted, before we can be converted, or become Christians."

"But are you not accountable this morning,

for the manner in which you treat your precious Saviour?"

"Yes, I suppose I am."

"Is He not this morning waiting to be gracious to you; and does he not tell you that now is the accepted time?"

"Yes, but is it not true, that I must have more feeling than I now have, before I can become a Christian?"

"The Bible does not tell us how much we must feel in order to become Christians, but it does tell us, 'To-day, if we will hear Christ's voice not to harden our hearts, by refusing his overtures of mercy.'"

"My heart is so hard already, that religion makes but little impression upon my mind."

"Well, my child, you admit, that your want of feeling does not release you from responsibility to your righteous Sovereign, and it cannot absolve me from the duty of laying the Gospel message before you. I must, therefore, as an ambassador of Christ, beseech you in his name, to be reconciled to God. Will you give up your controversy with your Maker, and become reconciled to him this morning?"

Here she became more serious, and inquired with evident emotion, "What shall I do?"

"You know what you ought to do, and I will tell you what you must do. You must either accept Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel, and go home a child of God; or reject him again, and go away in a state of condemnation, with his wrath abiding on you."

She now appeared to feel the full weight of her responsibility, and with tears exclaimed, "What shall I do!"

I told her that her duty was plain, and the question, whether she would go away a justified child, or a condemned sinner, must be decided by herself, and would be decided before she left the house.

I left her to make up her mind, and conversed with some other anxious persons; but before I dismissed the meeting, I returned to ask her, what answer I should give to him who sent me, when, to my great joy, I found her full of that peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

At a proper time she united with the church, and it was my mournful privilege, seven years

after the morning of which I have been speaking, to sit by her death-bed, and see her ready to depart and be with Christ.

Sinners are not only often kept away from CHRIST by the opinion that they have nothing to do until they shall undergo a process of awakening and conviction ; but Christians sometimes feel that little can be done for them until their minds are awakened to a sense of their guilt and danger. But from my own experience, I would advise my brethren always to treat the impenitent as free, accountable creatures, whose eternal well-being may depend upon the decision of the present moment. If we can get them to look at their condition, without regard to their feelings, they will be more likely to become convinced of sin, and come to Christ, than if we allow their real or supposed stupidity to keep us from urging the gospel message upon them.

It is true the sinner must be convinced of his lost condition, before he will feel his want of a Saviour ; but nothing will be more likely to convince him of this, than to have us treat him as one involved in a personal controversy with his Maker, which, if not terminated now,

will certainly become more aggravated, and may be put, by the providence of God, beyond the reach of reconciliation.

I have often sat down by an impenitent sinner, who professed to have no particular anxiety about himself, and yet, when pressed with the gospel message, he has become feelingly sensible of his lost condition, and before I have left him, has bowed his neck to the yoke of Christ. The doctrine of the Cross is to those "who perish, foolishness, but to those who are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God."



## THE INFIDEL LADY.

RETURNING from the funeral of a child in the city of \* \* \* \*, in 1831, I met, at the house of a friend, a widow lady of middle age, and of more than ordinary intelligence. After a little general conversation, I alluded to the funeral I had been attending, and inquired whether she felt herself prepared for that great change which we must all of us sooner or later experience.

After a few moments hesitation, she replied to my question by saying, that she was an infidel, and did not receive the Bible as the word of God.

After conversing with her long enough to satisfy myself that she had read the Holy Scriptures, and was acquainted with the common arguments which infidels have used against them, I inquired whether she believed in the existence of an infinitely wise and good God.

She replied that she did, and thought that the Bible gave a truthful account of his perfections.

I then inquired, "Do you believe that we were all created by this God?"

She replied, "certainly I do, I believe we are all the creatures of his power." I then said to her, "Madam, as you appear to have read the Bible, will you tell me whether an unshaken belief in its divine origin, and a cordial reception of the religion which it inculcates, would not be calculated to make men better and happier, even in this world, than such a belief as you cherish?"

She answered, "It must be so; the Bible requires men to love their neighbors as they love themselves, and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them; this would make good members of society; and the belief that they were going to heaven when they died would make them happy."

"You have answered truly. The moral code of the Bible, if believed and obeyed, would regulate, in the most perfect manner, all our intercourse with each other; while its rich and precious promises, if received and relied on, as coming from God, would elevate our affections, raise us above the world, and make us happy here. But if the Bible is not

a revelation from God, as it professes to be, it is one of the most impious compilations of falsehood that men have ever attempted to palm upon the world ; and yet, according to your own admission, a holy, wise, and good being, has formed an entire race of intelligent creatures, with such minds, that a belief in this impious and lying book, will make them better and happier than to believe the truth."

She remained silent for some time, and then, with considerable feeling, replied, "I have never before thought of the subject in this light."

After entreating her to examine the subject with care, to see if she could get rid of the conclusion at which we had arrived, I left her and returned home.

A short time after this conversation I preached an evening lecture in the neighborhood where this woman resided. After the public exercises I gave notice that if there were any who wished to converse with me about their own spiritual condition, they might remain after the congregation had withdrawn. To my great joy this widow was one who tarried for conversation. She had be-

come convinced that she must give up her belief in the being and perfections of God, or deny what her own judgment and observation as well as the history of the world, told her was the tendency of a belief in, and a cordial reception of the word of God, or she must renounce her infidelity. The two first she could not do, and she had done the last; and was come to inquire what she must do to be saved. She felt that her infidelity had resulted from a depraved heart, rather than from an enlightened mind, and trembled for herself as an undone sinner. I pointed out to her, as plainly as I could, the way of salvation. I told her that Jesus Christ had come to seek and to save that which was lost; and if she would submit to him and accept of his offered mercy, she would be accepted.

After a few days she indulged a hope in Christ, and at the next communion united herself with the people of God, and for years afterwards, I knew her as a consistent Christian, adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour, by a well-ordered life and conversation.

## A WORD SPOKEN IN SEASON.

WHILE on a journey for my health in 1812, on a hot, sultry day, I called at a farm-house in one of the beautiful towns in Berkshire County, Mass., to procure a drink of water. There happened to be no one in the house but a young lady, apparently about sixteen years of age, to whom I was introduced by my traveling companion, and from whom I received a glass of that refreshing and healthy beverage, which flows in such rich abundance from the hills of New England.

As I arose to depart I took her hand, and said, "Permit me, my dear girl, before I leave you, to inquire whether you have yet given your heart to your precious Saviour?"

She replied in the negative, while the tear that stole down her cheek, showed that she was not without feeling.

I then said to her, "My child, I am a minister of Jesus Christ, and as such it is not only my duty, but my privilege, to offer you eternal life, upon the condition of your repenting of

your sins, and putting your trust in him; will you accept of this offer?"

She answered with deep emotion, "I cannot decide that question now."

I said, "You will have to decide it now. Jesus Christ is beseeching you by me, to be reconciled to God, and if you do not choose to tell me what your decision is, He will take the answer from your heart, and it will be recorded in heaven, that you have either accepted the offer of eternal life made to you by your Redeemer to-day, or that you have rejected him again."

She seemed to take a new view of her fearful responsibility, and wept convulsively; but could not be prevailed on to tell me what her decision was.

After repeating some appropriate passages of Scripture to show her her duty and her danger I left her, expecting to see and hear of her no more, until we should meet at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Years afterwards, on stepping upon a steam-boat in New York to go to Philadelphia, my name being called by some of my friends on board, a gentleman came up to me, and asked



if my name was Wisner. On being answered in the affirmative, he inquired if I had ever been in the town of —, in Berkshire County. I told him I had passed through it in 1812. He then informed me, that when he was coming from home, a lady requested him, if he should meet me on his journey, to say, that she was the individual who gave me the glass of water—that what I had said on that occasion sunk so deep into her heart, that she could find no rest until she hoped she had closed in with the offer of her blessed Lord—and that she wished me to accept her thanks for what was to her, truly, “a word spoken in season.”

How many opportunities more promising than the one which, by the grace of God, resulted in the conversion of this dear girl to her Saviour, do Christians and Christian ministers suffer to pass unimproved; and yet the Master has said, “Sow your seed in the morning, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.” The redemption of the soul is precious, and it will soon cease forever, and ought we not to embrace every opportunity, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come?

THE OPPORTUNITY OF SAVING A SOUL LOST BY  
NEGLECT.

Not many years since, a young lady in one of our western cities, who was a leader in all the gay and fashionable amusements of the place, was awakened to a sense of her lost and perishing condition. She studiously concealed her feelings from every one, until a young companion, with whom she was in habits of great intimacy, came to spend a night with her. They retired to bed very early, and the awakened girl unbosomed herself freely to her young friend, and told her that she had intended that night to have visited her pastor.

Her visitor told her that it was yet early, and if she would get up, they would both go to see their minister, and talk with him about the salvation of their souls, for she began to feel that it was a matter of great importance.

The awakened one gladly acceded to this proposal, and in a few minutes they were both on their way to their pastor's house.

When arrived, they found three of the members of the church visiting their good min-

ister and his lady, and they all spent the remainder of the evening together; but the girls could not bring themselves to speak of the object of their visit, and neither the pastor nor his wife, or any one else, said a word to them about the state of their own hearts. The time was spent, as it too often is on such occasions, in conversation about earthly things.

The effect of this neglect upon the young ladies was, that they both came to the conclusion that their pastor did not believe what he preached, and the awakened one dismissed her serious thoughts, and returned to her old companions, and to her gay and fashionable amusements, and was more vain and thoughtless than ever.

I have not published this sad result of ministerial neglect to expose the faults of a brother, but for the purpose of warning pastors and private Christians, of the danger of forgetting the command of Paul to Timothy, "Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."

We never know when we are in the company of impenitent sinners, but it may be the

last time ; nor can we be sure that the Holy Spirit is not striving with them, and that God has not sent them to us for the very purpose of giving us an opportunity to do them good. Souls are so precious, probation is so short, and life so uncertain, that we should waste no time in idle conversation with those who are every moment in danger of sinking down to hell, but should endeavor to convince them of their perilous situation, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come.

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#### THE SAD EFFECTS OF PARENTAL NEGLECT.

At a time of more than usual feeling in my congregation, I found in my meeting of inquiry a young man of genteel appearance, who I had never met before. After conversing with some other inquirers, I sat down by the stranger and inquired about the state of his mind, when, to my perfect astonishment, he informed me that he was an infidel.

I then said to him, "There are several kinds of infidels, to what class do you belong?"

"His reply was, "I am an atheist, I do not believe in the Saviour, I do not believe in the being of a God."

"What induced you to come here, if these are your sentiments?"

"I cannot tell: I was at your meeting this afternoon and heard your invitation to those who wished to converse with you about the salvation of their own souls, and I thought I would avail myself of the opportunity."

"But why do you wish to converse with me on that subject if you do not believe even in the being of a God?"

"I do not know how to answer you,—I feel very unhappy—I have no resting-place—I have indulged my infidelity until I am unable to believe anything."

"Where was you born and brought up? and what was your early training?"

"I was born and brought up in the city of New York, and my father and mother were both members of the Presbyterian Church."

"What led you, in the land of Bibles and Sabbaths, and with Christian parents to watch

over and instruct you, to become an infidel?"

"O, sir, my parents, while they were moral people, and regular attendants on the ordinances of the Church, never, to my recollection, said anything to me about the salvation of my soul. This first led me to doubt the truth of religion. I thought if my parents believed it, they could not neglect the soul of their child as they did. These doubts grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, and prepared me at eighteen to attend the lectures of Fanny Wright, and join the society of free inquirers. Here I became confirmed in my unbelief. Soon after I had become initiated into this society, business called me to the South, where I have spent three years, the last in New Orleans. I have associated most of the time with men of my own sentiments. I have indulged my skepticism until my mind is becoming unsettled about the truths of history, and almost everything else. I am very unhappy, and I thought I would come and converse with you."

I told him I was glad he had come, for I thought he needed the influence of religion to



preserve his mind from derangement, but as the evening was too far spent to protract our conversation at that time, I would invite him to meet me the next week at a place which I named to him.

At our next meeting I led him back to first principles, placed before him the laws of evidence, and induced him to apply those laws to the evidences of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures. He soon became deeply interested in the subject, and in the course of the evening became convinced that the infidel argument was as fatal to secular history as it was to the divinity of the Christian system; and that there was more historical evidence in favor of the truths of the Bible, than there was of the existence of such men as Alexander, Julius Cæsar, or Napoleon.

He continued to visit me often, and in a few weeks became established in his belief of the Holy Scriptures, and indulged a hope in Christ.

He was soon called away from the place where I resided, and I have never seen him since, but from my short acquaintance with him, before and after his change, I shall hope

to see him at the right hand of the Judge at the last day.

I have recorded this incident as a warning to Christian parents, not to neglect the religious instruction of their children. If you do not manifest a suitable interest about the salvation of their souls, how can they believe that you are sincere in your Christian professions? Was not the conclusion of this young man, the natural one? Is it possible for parents to believe the Scriptures, and yet take no pains to lead their children to Christ?

The children of Israel were directed by God, to teach their religion to their children, not on the Sabbath-day only, but on every day of the week. They were to write the great truths of the Bible upon the posts of their doors, and upon their gates, where their children could read them; and they were to talk to them about these truths, as things which belonged to their peace, when they should lie down, and when they should rise up, when they sat in the house, and when they walked by the way. And if this was necessary for the Jews, when they were living under a Theocracy, and guarded on every side against

the encroachments of infidelity, is it less needful in our land, where we are surrounded by every modification of infidelity, and where our children meet with the panders of vice at every corner of the street? It is the want of such training that fills our churches with impenitent and disorderly members, and our nation with latitudinarianism and infidelity; and unless some means can be devised to turn the hearts of parents to their children, that high regard for the word of God, and for the institutions of our holy religion, which were once the distinguishing elements in our national character, will depart; and that atmosphere of Christian influence which has hitherto sustained the health and the life of our free institutions, will give place to the deadly malaria from the stagnant pools of formalism and infidelity, which will poison the life blood of our nation.

## AN IMPROPER USE OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

A well-educated, intelligent, and amiable female member of my church, was for years subject to the most perplexing doubts respecting her own religious character, and the most distressing fears of finally failing of the great salvation. While her friends were confident of her piety she was constantly writing bitter things against herself, and was tormented with the most bitter apprehensions of being found at last on the left hand of her Judge and Saviour. The anguish of her soul was sometimes so great, that while I have been conversing with her about her spiritual state, her whole frame has become agitated to such a degree that her teeth would chatter like those of a person in a violent paroxysm of ague.

At first I endeavored to comfort her by calling her attention to the consolation that there is in Christ. But this did not afford her any relief. She prized these blessings very highly, but feared they were not for her. She

appreciated the fullness that there was in Christ, but would constantly discover something in her own heart or life which made her afraid to rely on that fullness.

After several interviews, in all of which I had failed to communicate comfort, or to satisfy myself as to the real difficulty in the case, I endeavored to get her to open her mind unreservedly to me, as her pastor, keeping nothing back. Though I could not get her to unbosom herself as fully as I desired, yet I thought I could discover that she was spending her time, and exerting her energies in trying to satisfy herself whether the hope she had been resting on would prove an anchor to her soul in the final storm. To decide this question, she was constantly comparing her own feelings with the feelings of other Christians; and her own heart and life, with the standard furnished in the word of God. She would always arise from this kind of examination with her hope well-nigh destroyed, and her mental anguish greatly aggravated. I felt deeply distressed for her, and one day said to her, "I think you had better look off from yourself, and give up examining your old

hopes. It is comparatively of small importance whether you have ever been a Christian or not, if you will now close in with the offers of mercy. The Holy Scriptures inform you that 'now is the accepted time, and to-day is the day of salvation.' If this is Christ's accepted time make it yours."

"But must I not look at myself to know truly whether my heart is right with God, and whether I do really love my Saviour?"

"Your heart will never be made right by the contemplation of yourself, nor will you ever find any love to Christ, by searching for it in your own bosom. It is only when we behold, as in a glass, the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, that we are changed into his image, from glory to glory; and it is only when we are engaged in the contemplation of THAT IMAGE that our affections are enkindled, and flow out spontaneously in emotions of love."

"But are we not required in the Holy Scriptures to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith?"

"Certainly we are. We are bound to know whether we believe the record which God has



given us respecting his Son. But this examination will take us out of ourselves ; and will bring us to contemplate the glorious doctrines of the Cross of Christ, and while it inflames our love will confirm our hope. If you will confine yourself to this kind of self-examination, it will not involve you in darkness ; it will be looking off from yourself to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Do you not see the difference between this sort of examination and that which you have been pursuing ?”

“ I think I can. But is there not another kind of self-examination spoken of in the Holy Scriptures ?”

“ Yes, there is. We must examine ourselves to see if we are living in any sinful practice. David not only did this, but he was so desirous of forsaking every way of sin, that he besought the Searcher of hearts to help to search him. He prayed, ‘ Search me, O, God, and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ He wanted God to search, and show him whether there was any evil way in him.”

"This is the way that I examine myself. I look into my heart and look back upon my life to see what manner of person I am."

"Here is the difference, my child, between the two kinds of examination ; you examine yourself to see whether you are a child of God. David and Paul examined themselves to see what there was in them that was wrong, that they might put it away ; you look at your heart and life to see if you had not better give up your hope. They looked at theirs to see if they could not find some sins from which they might purify themselves. The tendency of their self-examination was the death of their sins ; the tendency of yours is the death of your hope."

"But ought I not, when I examine myself and find that I am full of sin, to give up my hopes?"

"By no means. You should give up your sins. What good would your self-examination do you if it only led you to give up your hope ? The Christian hope leads to the purifying of our heart and life. The Scriptures do not say that he who giveth up his hope purifieth himself, but, "He who hath this

hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.' Satan would have the Christian give up his hope, because he knows that without it he will make no progress in holiness."

"But how can we hope when we see nothing but sin in ourselves?"

"By coming out from ourselves, and putting our trust in the Lord our righteousness. If your heart was as holy as Gabriel's, you could not put your trust there, or build up your hope on such a foundation. The Christian does not purify himself that he may have hope, but because he has hope; it is the anchor of his soul, and when Christ, who is his hope, shall appear, then he shall appear with him in glory. Fix your eye on Christ, throw yourself at his feet, and contemplate his love, and see if a flame will not kindle up in your own heart, which, like the light on the path of the just, will shine more and more to the perfect day."

It was about four o'clock P. M., when this distressed female left my study, and that evening I received from her a note, informing me that she was full of joy and peace in believing. She was so clear in her mind, and so happy in

Christ, that she doubted whether she had ever known what the Christian hope was before.

Multitudes of God's people, like this female, spend their lives in darkness and doubt, because they let their frames and feelings, their short-comings and misdoings, get between themselves and Christ. They forget that He bore their sins in his own body on the tree; and that if they are his, they were *constructively* crucified with him. It was this view of our relation to Christ which led the apostle, in the eighth chapter of Romans, exultingly to inquire, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?"

Reader, permit me to detain you a short time, to contemplate this precious apostolic amplification of the ground of our hope.

In the preceding chapter, Paul shows the hopeless wickedness of the man who should strive to obtain justification by the law. In the first thirty-two verses of this eighth chapter, he expatiates upon the blessedness of the

individual who had taken refuge under the blood of atonement. From the 14th to the 17th verses, inclusive, we are told that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God;" and that such have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father." These are the adopted children of God; they are not only heirs, but are the "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Pause here, dear reader, and lift up your heart in adoration and praise. Here is the broad foundation of the Christian hope, and the climax of his blessedness. The moment a sinner believes, he becomes by adoption the heir of God, and the joint-heir with Jesus Christ. He holds his inheritance to that kingdom which was prepared for him before the foundation of the world, by the same deed by which the Saviour holds his. We are heirs in common with Christ, to an "inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, eternal in the heavens." If his title is sure, ours cannot fail.

The Apostle having thus laid the foundation of Christian hope, by showing that those that are in Christ must stand or fall with him,

exultingly inquires, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect" or chosen ones? This question after what he had said, of the manner in which they were related to the Saviour as joint-heirs with him, would seem sufficient to silence every doubt that might have entered the Christian bosom; but the Apostle wrote by the inspiration of that Spirit who knew our slowness of heart to believe, and therefore he amplifies, and unfolds more minutely the grounds of our safety. He begins this amplification by laying down an axiom in Christian theology, viz. : "That it is God that justifieth," and then asks, "who is he that condemneth?" Here let us repeat this soul-comforting question, and sound it through the ranks of God's people, and through the ranks of caviling sinners, and through the ranks of those fallen spirits, who are the accusers of the brethren, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

Trembling believer, It is God who justifieth thy guilty soul, who shall dare to condemn one whom the Almighty has justified?

Caviling sinner, thou who art always finding fault with the Christian, "It is God that



justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" Accusing spirits, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?"

But wicked men, and fallen spirits, and weak consciences, may still say, look what a vile imperfect creature you are, and then say how you dare hope that a God of eternal purity and immutable justice will ever justify you?

Well, we are not afraid to answer our own accusing consciences, or accusing sinners, or accusing devils, on this subject. But we will not do this as Satan would have us, and as wicked men expect, and as self-righteous unbelief will sometimes suggest, by apologizing for our sins, or by denying them, nor yet by bringing up any good works, or right feelings, to set off against them. If we should do either of these things, our own heart would join with wicked men and devils in condemning us. No, ye accusers of God's people, it is not by works of righteousness which our own hands have wrought, nor by any holy emotions which our own hearts have felt, that we would meet your argument for our condemnation. We would lay our hands on our mouths and our mouths

in the dust, and acknowledge that we are in our own persons unclean. We have no controversy with you on this score. But still we have a plan which none of you dare gainsay; and that is, "That Christ hath died, and arose again, and is now at the right hand of God, making intercession for us." These three facts constitute our defence, sustain our hope, and fill us with joy and peace. And,

*First*, Christ has died. But he did not die for himself. He was crucified for our offences. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. We were *constructively* crucified with him and in him. The apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ, yet nevertheless, I live; yet, not I, but Christ, who liveth in me." Here is the glorious mystery of man's redemption. We were crucified with Christ, and now Christ lives in us. So far as our personal justification is concerned, it is as if we had in our own persons been tried and found guilty of some offence against the State, and had been executed to satisfy the penalty of the law, and afterwards had been raised by Christ from the dead. As in that supposed case, the law of man could have no farther demands upon us;

so, in this case, the law of God can have no further demand. It was satisfied by our death on the cross with Christ.

*Secondly*, Christ has risen again. But as he did not die for himself, so he did not rise for himself. As he was put to death for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification; and as we were *constructively* crucified with him, so we have been constructively raised with him. As we were partakers with him in his death, so also we are partakers with him in his resurrection. The Apostle saith, "It is not I who live, but Christ who liveth in me." But,

*Thirdly*, and lastly; Christ is now at the right hand of the Father, to make intercession for his people. And what does he plead for us before the throne of the Righteous Judge? Our merits? No. Our good works? No. Our good frames and feelings? No. What then? His own atoning death, in which we were by a gracious construction united with him, and his own perfect and spotless righteousness. Will this plea be availing? If it is, then let us away with all our unbelief. He was crucified for our offences, and raised again

for our justification. "We are complete in him." "There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made all such free from the law of sin and death."

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#### TRIUMPH IN DEATH.

IN the month of May, 1832, I was called home from Philadelphia, by a letter announcing the sickness of my third son, a lad of fifteen years.

I reached home on the first of June, and found my poor child pale and emaciated, but considered by his physician out of danger. I endeavored to converse with him about the state of his mind, but could not overcome a backwardness which he had always manifested to speak of his own feelings. On the 27th of July he became rather more unwell, and on Lord's day, the 5th of August, was evidently

sinking, and the doctor gave up all hope of his recovery. He now called me to his bed and told me that he felt he must die ; and that he had no hope that he was a Christian, and wished me to pray for him. I conversed freely with him, and found that he had correct views both in regard to himself and the way of salvation ; but his own guilt, in having rejected Christ so long, made him afraid to take hold of the offers of mercy. I set before him the promise, " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and urged him to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus ; and take hold of this single promise, and rest his salvation upon it. I knelt by his bed, and, with a bleeding heart, plead the promises of the Abrahamic covenant for my dying boy. He continued in great distress of mind for five or six hours, when he seemed to take an intelligent hold on the promises, and hope dawned upon his soul. From this time till Friday night, though he seemed to be in a dying state, and was almost constantly exercised with excruciating pain, he was most of the time tranquil and happy, and bore his sufferings with the most uncomplaining patience. He would say to me, " I can

suffer anything while my mind rests on Christ."

On the 15th, he revived, and seemed to come up from the gates of death. He became free from pain, all the violence of his symptoms abated, and his physician thought he would recover. He remained free from pain, and in a happy state of mind, till the 26th, when we became convinced that the Lord had only granted him this temporary relief from his suffering, that he might exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, and comfort his afflicted friends, by affording them additional evidence of his having passed from death unto life. This he did up to the moment of his departure. His intellectual faculties were mature beyond his age, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit endeared him to all who were conversant with him. When we would speak to him about his feelings in view of his recovery, he would shake his head, and tell us he was afraid of returning health, lest it might obscure his view of Christ, and make him worldly-minded.

On the 27th, his disease, which had been on his bowels, was transferred to his lungs, and his sufferings returned, to abate no more till



he rested in death. But the return of his sufferings, and the certainty of his death, did not at all disturb the serenity of his mind, except in a few short intervals, when he would lose sight of his Saviour; and even then, though he would be greatly distressed, he gave strong evidence of a sanctified heart. His trouble, in those seasons, did not seem to arise from the the absence of hope, but from losing sight of his Redeemer. He appeared more like Mary, weeping at the empty sepulchre, because she could not find her crucified Lord, than like one who did not put his trust in the promises. "I know," he would say, "that the promises are sure, but how can I die with Jesus hiding his face from me." On the night of the 29th, I retired to get a little rest, for I was just recovering from the cholera, but the image of my suffering child would not permit me to sleep.

At 3 o'clock A. M., he sent for me; and when I entered his room he requested all but his mother and myself to leave him. He then told us he felt a change coming over him, which indicated a speedy dissolution, and he wished us to pray that he might be supported

under his last struggle. I examined him, and finding that the hand of death was indeed upon him, we knelt, and with feelings which none but parents under similar circumstances can ever know, poured out our souls to our Heavenly Father, in prayer, that the Angel of the Covenant might walk with our beloved child through the dark valley. About sunrise he wished me to call the family together, that he might unite with us once more in our morning devotions. After prayer it pleased the Lord again to hide his face from him, and he endured one of the most dreadful seasons of mental agony I ever witnessed. It lasted for nearly twenty minutes, when his soul was again cheered by the light of his Saviour's countenance. He then insisted that his mother and I should go and take some breakfast. When we returned he requested us to fortify ourselves for the trying scene. "Don't appear distressed," he said, with a voice full of affection, "for that will distress me, and make the last struggle more painful." He then requested me to pray once more for the divine presence in the trying hour. After prayer he lay quiet, and seemed much exhausted. I took his

cold hand, and told him if Christ was with him to press mine, which he immediately did, and then said, "It is a struggle—Satan troubles me, but if I should go to hell, I would go leaning on Jesus." He lay tranquil, and apparently happy, for a few moments, and then, with such a countenance as I had never before seen, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and said, in a sweet strong voice, "*I am coming*;" then turning to me and his mother, with a look of indescribable tenderness, he said, "He is waiting—farewell." And turning his eyes again towards heaven, exclaimed, "I am coming! O, what love!" The silver cord was then broken, and the spirit fled: but the impress of a heavenly mind was left upon his countenance until the coffin and the grave hid it from our sight.

I have given the reader this brief memoir of my son, not from a desire to speak of myself, or of my family; but from a wish to magnify the grace of God, and to induce parents to be more faithful in preparing their children for the hour of death. Let those of us who have baptized children, yet living without Christ, wrestle with God in prayer, night and

day, for them. Let us plead the covenant, though we have broken it on our part, and never let go of the promises while our children are the subject of prayer. Let us never forget that God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

The baptism of our children is not an unmeaning ceremony, which may be performed when convenient and agreeable, and may be neglected with impunity; but a solemn covenant transaction between ourselves and the Almighty, in which our little ones are deeply interested. "The promise is to you and your children." The ordinance is to us what circumcision was to the Jews, "a seal of the righteousness of faith." The seal is changed, but the covenant is unchangeable. "It was confirmed of God in Christ." Let us engrave this covenant on our hearts, meditate upon it, pray over it; and train our children according to their relation to God. We should not, as the manner of some is, neglect presenting our children for baptism, at the earliest opportunity; and when we receive them back from the

hands of the minister, we should feel that we have bound ourselves to bring them up for Christ, and not for the world. Let us keep our minds fixed upon the end of their mortal course, the hour when their souls will be required of them ; and let us see to it, that our example and our instruction, and discipline, all combine to prepare them for that hour. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; therefore if we would deliver our beloved ones from the sting of death, we must labor and pray to have them come to him, " who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

## CHRIST'S YOKE.

AT one of my stated Wednesday evening lectures, I discoursed to my people from the words of the Saviour in Matt. xi. 29—"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

I told the congregation that the duty of unconditional submission to the Saviour, was illustrated in our text by the habits of the ox. That as that docile animal would quietly, at the bidding of his master, put his neck under the yoke, and suffer it to be keyed and made fast upon him, without knowing where he was to be driven, or how he was to be fed; so the sinner, if he would become the disciple of the meek and lowly Saviour, must submit himself into his hands without making any conditions. He must feel in his heart what the ox expressed by his conduct; that however the Lord might dispose of him, or whatever He might require of him, he would be his. I told them



that as the ox that thus quietly submitted to the yoke, if he had a good master, would be kindly provided for, protected and nourished; so the sinner, who unconditionally submitted to Christ, would find safety, peace and rest for his soul, under the kind protection and care of his gracious Redeemer. But as the ox who would not submit to the yoke would be led to the slaughter; so the sinner, who would not submit to Christ must be miserably destroyed.

At the close of the lecture I invited those who had made up their minds to take Christ's yoke upon them, to meet me in the basement room of the house, immediately after the benediction.

When I entered the room where I had appointed to meet them, I found six individuals, who professed to have given themselves up to the Saviour that night. I examined them as carefully as I could, and thought they gave evidence of having taken Christ's yoke upon them, within the meaning of the text.

How beautifully the Lord illustrates spiritual things by temporal! He takes the objects

with which we are familiar, to explain and enforce those duties which stand indissolubly connected with our eternal well-being. His figures, like illuminated diagrams, place the great truths of our holy religion, so plainly and vividly before the mind, that the weakest intellect can discern their meaning, and the dullest imagination receive their impression. A man who was in the congregation, at the time to which I have alluded, told me, that the text made such an impression on his mind, that the whole of the next day, when he was alone and thinking on the subject, he would find himself involuntarily bowing his head, to place his neck under the yoke of Christ.

Impenitent reader, will you take upon you the yoke of Christ, which is easy, or bear the galling yoke of sin? There is no neutrality in this war. The one or the other yoke you must bear; and in the one or the other service you will spend your time. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Sin is here by a bold figure, represented as an inexorable tyrant, and you as his slave,

or servant; and the end of this servitude is death. The service of sin is a hard service, he requires you to do violence to your judgment and conscience; to trample the dear Redeemer under your feet, and to do despite unto the Holy Spirit. From this hard and disgraceful servitude the Saviour calls you away. He invites you to break the yoke of sin from your neck, and take his easy yoke upon you. The question which I would press upon your heart and conscience is, will you take Christ's yoke upon you, or continue the bond-slave of sin? "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## THE SON WHO WAS LOST FOUND.

As I was engaged one cold winter morning in conversing with a number of awakened sinners, in my meeting of inquiry, the door was opened, and a poor, bloated inebriate, thinly clad, came in trembling with the cold, and took his seat near the stove. When I had conversed with all the rest who were present, I sat down by the stranger, and inquired what his object was in visiting our meeting. To my inquiry he gave me, in substance, the following answer: "I am a poor, unhappy man, I have been for some years in the habit of intemperance; a short time since I became offended with my father, quarrelled with my wife, and left my parents and my family with the intention of returning to them no more. I came to this place without money, pawned my overcoat for my supper and lodging last night, and on hearing the bell ring this morning, and learning that there was a meeting of inquiry here, I have come to see if there is yet mercy for such a man as I am."

"Do you feel that you are a lost sinner and justly deserve the wrath of a holy God?" I inquired.

"I know I am. I have been religiously brought up, have a praying father, and a good wife; but I have made a brute of myself, and have abused and forsaken my best friends."

"Have you drank anything this morning?"

"I have not."

"Do you mean to give up drinking altogether and be a sober man?"

"That is my purpose, the Lord helping me."

"Do you feel your need of a Saviour?"

"I do."

"Are you willing now to forsake your sins and give yourself up into the hands of the Redeemer to be his forever?"

"That is the desire of my heart."

The time having now come to close our meeting, I prayed for the poor inebriate, and making an appointment for a meeting in the afternoon, I took the stranger home with me to dinner. After we had dined I learned that he was the son of a deacon in the Presbyterian Church, with whom I was acquainted, and at whose house I had spent a night soon after I

was licensed to preach the gospel. I furnished him with money to redeem his coat, and kept him in my family until he indulged a hope in Christ; and then paid his fare, and put him on board the stage to return to his afflicted family.

I have subsequently heard that he got home safe, and was a reformed man, and gave his friends reason to believe that he had a good hope through grace.

The afflicted father, though he knew not where his poor son had gone, followed him with his prayers, and that God, who heareth the prayers of his people, followed the prodigal with his providential care, and led him to a place where the Spirit was then being poured out, conducted him to the meeting of inquiry, and put him under the care of his father's friend, by whom he was fed and lodged, and sent back to be a comfort to his afflicted parent, and a blessing to his wife and children. Surely it is safe to trust the Lord, and we should never give our children up while they remain on probationary ground. When they have thrown themselves beyond the reach of our counsel, and are so far re-



moved from us, that we can exercise no care over them, we can still pray for them. If they are baptized children we can plead the promises of the covenant with a covenant-keeping God.

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## SIN'S VICTIM.

WHILE visiting some friends in the village of \* \* \* \*, I called to see a wretched female who had been seduced from the path of virtue in her early youth, and, from despair of retrieving a lost reputation, had subsequently abandoned herself to a life of infamy. I found her in a little log cabin alone, lying upon that bed from which she never arose. She was a little past the middle age, and had the remains of an intelligent and interesting countenance, but misery and despair sat enthroned upon her brow.

On inquiring about the state of her health, and her prospects for another world, she replied, with deep emotion :

“ Oh, I am very near my grave, and I know I shall be in hell as soon as I am dead.”

I said, “ Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and if you will put your trust in him, even now, He will have mercy.”

“ Oh, it is too late, my days have been spent in sin, they are now numbered and I am lost !”

“ You have yet a space given you for repentance, and though it is the eleventh hour, if you will come to Christ, he will in no wise cast you off.”

“ If Christ were mine I should now be happy, but He is not mine, I have abused his grace, have filled up the measure of my guilt, and must eat the fruit of my own doings.”

After trying in vain to lead her to the Saviour, I left her, writhing under the reproaches of a guilty conscience; with nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation from the presence of the Lord.

She died soon after I left, and was buried, and, if her own apprehensions were realised, is now lifting up her eyes in hell, being in torment; and when ten thousand years shall have

run their ample round, she will be no nearer the end of her sufferings than she is at present. How true it is that "The wicked are driven away in their wickedness."

Reader, I have given you, in this incident, a glance at the life and death, and prospects for eternity, of a victim of seduction. Here was an interesting girl, of tender years, who fell into the snare of the seducer. She was first betrayed and ruined, and afterwards driven, by remorse and shame, from her once peaceful home, and from respectable society, to the company and the pursuits of the abandoned and the vile. This is not an isolated case. Thousands are thus betrayed and ruined, in our own land, every year. It is estimated that thirty thousand American females are annually sacrificed upon the altar of this MOLOCH. Contemplate the wretchedness which the disgrace and ruin of so many children must occasion to the families out of which they have been taken, and then form an estimate of the guilt of the libertine. The thief who steals our property is incarcerated in the penitentiary, and the man who imbues his hands in his neighbor's blood, expiates his guilt upon the scaffold;

and shall the fiends who rob their victims of what is more precious than life, and drag them down to a premature grave, by the steps which take hold on hell, occupy a place in the social circle of civilized men? The temporal evil is the least of the sad results of this sin. It "kills beyond the grave." It not only spreads the mantle of despair over the domestic circle, and eats out the soul from the social virtues, and fills the ground with the putrid carcases of its slain, but it will feed upon the souls of its victims in the world of woe. Its work of pollution and misery and death here is the prelude to the dismay, and agony, and despair of the world to come. I know that it has become fashionable to feel that this sin must not be spoken of, or written about, by the friends of virtue and religion, lest we promote the evil which we design to put down. But this is a device of Satan, that the poison might be administered without the antidote, and the temptation presented without the way of escape. But this must not be suffered any longer. The pulpit and the press, and the domestic fireside, must speak out on this subject; and the truths of God's word, and the

truths of history, and the truths of observation, must be made to shine and burn about this deed of darkness, until its guilt and pollution, and misery and ruin, shall become so fixed in the mind, that, by the laws of association, the temptation which it presents shall become as revolting and as dreadful to the mind, as the damnation to which it leads. This must be done. Fashion must no longer protect, nor false delicacy screen, the libertine from the rebuke of the friends of virtue and religion. He must be driven from his hiding place, and stripped of his disguise, and held up in his true character, *a pimp, or male bawd, "who swears but to deceive, and smiles but to destroy."*

## THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN.

WHILE sitting by a comfortable fire, one cold evening, my son came in and told me there was a young man at the door who wished to procure work. As such applications were somewhat frequent at that time, I sent word to him that I did not wish to employ him. When my son returned he told me the man wept when he left the door. I sent immediately after him and had him brought in, and inquired about his circumstances. He told me he was just from England, and was in search of an uncle, who lived in Cincinnati; that he had expended the last cent of his money, was worn out with fatigue, and knew not what to do. I inquired whether he could saw wood, but found him unacquainted with that and almost every kind of ordinary labor. He had been brought up in an apothecary store as a sort of under-clerk, and was ignorant of almost everything else.

Though he was of little use to me, I could not turn him away, and told him he might



remain with me and work enough to pay for his board. He joyfully accepted my offer, and took up his abode in my family.

I inquired as to the state of his mind, and found that he was a speculative believer in divine revelation, and felt that he must be a Christian or be lost; but had no idea that he had anything more to do than read the Bible, go to meeting, and say his prayers. My first object was to turn his attention to those passages of Scripture in which the sinner is called upon to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He acknowledged his obligation to comply with these requirements, but thought he could not do this until his heart was changed. I told him that God commanded the sinner to "make to himself a new heart and a new spirit." That God had provided a Saviour for him, and did not require him to wait for anything, but to repent and believe now. This was evidently a view of duty he had never taken before, and he became serious and troubled, in view of his responsibility and his danger; and in the course of three or four weeks he indulged a comfortable hope in Christ.

He remained in my family until the spring opened, when I supplied him with money to bear his expenses, and he left us to go to his uncle in Cincinnati.

The doctrine of man's inability to do what God commands him, and what the gospel makes the condition of his salvation, is keeping great multitudes quiet in their sins; and when the sinner is awakened to a sense of his danger it often prevents him from coming to Christ. While it is true that, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," it is equally true that the difficulty does not lie in the want of ability, but in the want of a will. The only reason why all men are not saved, is stated by the Saviour himself to be, "That they will not come to him that they might have life." The invitation of the gospel is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." To talk about waiting for the heart to be changed, is for the sinner to make his own unwillingness to come to Christ an excuse for not coming.

THE CUP BLESSED TO THE AWAKENING OF A  
SINNER.

AT one of my communion seasons, before the giving of the cup to the deacons, I held it up and remarked to the impenitent, who were present, that, when they should be asking in vain for a drop of water to cool their parched tongues, in the world of woe, they would remember that they had accounted themselves unworthy of eternal life, and had put the cup which was symbolical of Christ's blood away from them.

Early in the week I was called upon by a member of the church to go and see a niece of his wife, who was visiting them. On being introduced to the young lady, I found her deeply anxious about herself, as a sinner in the sight of God. On inquiring how long she had been in that state of mind, she told me that she had no particular sense of her guilt or danger, until the preceding Sabbath, and that it was my holding up the sacramental cup as a witness against the impenitent, that convinced

her of her guilt and danger. She felt that she had on that occasion sealed her rejection of her dying Lord, and that if He should treat her as she had treated Him, she must mourn at the last when her flesh and her body were consumed, and say, "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof."

"Are you willing," said I, "to repent now of your great wickedness?"

"If to be sorry for my sins is repentance, I have repented of them already."

"There is a repentance by a worldly sorrow which worketh death, and needeth to be repented of, but a godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life. The first is a sorrow in view of the evil to which sin exposes us; the second is a sorrow for sin as committed against a holy God. This leads us to hate sin and loathe ourselves on account of our wickedness, and to turn with our heart from sin to holiness. Is your sorrow of the latter kind?"

"I think I do loathe myself on account of my sins, and earnestly desire to be delivered from them."

"Jesus Christ came into the world, primarily, to save his people from their sins. Is he just

such a Saviour as you need, and as your heart desires?"

"Oh, I think he is! But I have rejected him so long! Will he accept of me now?"

"Yes, he will. He says, 'now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation.'"

She seemed affected with the forbearance of God, and said she would be his.

I told her if she would be Christ's, she must give herself up entirely to him, and trust herself entirely in his hands, "must deny herself all ungodliness, and mortify those youthful lusts which drown so many in destruction and perdition."

The next time I saw her was in a large company of friends, who had assembled at her uncle's house on her account. In the course of the evening she came and sat down by me and said, "O, Mr. Wisner, how differently I feel from what I ever did before! The world has lost its charms. Religion seems now to me, not only as the one thing needful, but as the one thing to be desired."

"Is Christ precious to you now?"

"O, yes! infinitely precious!"

“How do you feel toward those impenitent friends who are here to-night?”

She replied, “I feel deeply anxious for their salvation.”

I called on her frequently during her stay in the place, and obtained satisfactory evidence that she had passed from death unto life.

She left in a few weeks and returned home, and I have never seen her since, but hope she will be found at the right hand of the Judge in the day of final trial.

Impenitent sinner, how often have you put the cup of salvation away from you? Have you never felt that those who partook of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of your dying Lord, assumed a responsibility which you would not dare to take upon yourself? This is a common feeling among serious-minded, impenitent sinners: and yet it is true that the impenitent, who turn their backs upon the ordinance, take upon themselves the most fearful responsibility. The Christian by partaking, sacramentally confesses Christ before men; the impenitent by not partaking, sacramentally rejects him. It is a sacramental transaction to both, and if they are both taken at



their word, it will be to the one a savor of life unto life, and to the other a savor of death unto death.

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#### GOING DOWN INTO THE WATER.

At the close of a preparatory lecture, a young man who had been examined, and was expecting to unite with the church at the approaching communion, came up to me in a high state of excitement, and told me he was in trouble. He could not unite with the church as he wished to do, and had intended.

"Why," said I, "what is the matter?"

"O," said he, "some of my Baptist friends have been laboring with me on the subject of immersion, and though they have not convinced me that I must be immersed, yet they have led me to believe in a mode which differs both from yours and theirs; and I do not see that I shall ever be able to make a profession of religion."

Perceiving that he was much agitated, I

told him to be calm, that if he wished to be baptized with water, in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I could baptize him, and he could unite with the church of his choice.

On hearing this he became calm, and I inquired how he thought he ought to be baptized.

"Why," said he, "I feel that I ought to go down into the water, as the Eunuch did, and there be baptized."

"And how will you be baptized after you get down into the water?"

"I think the Bible clearly favors sprinkling, and when I have gone down into the water, I wish to kneel and be baptized by sprinkling."

I told him if nothing else would satisfy his conscience, he should be baptized in that way; but I wished to ask him a few questions first. To this he assented, and I said, "When you and I shall both go down into the water, as Philip and the Eunuch did, will any part of the ordinance of baptism be administered?"

"No; that will only be a preparatory step; but it will be doing as a primitive minister of Christ, and a disciple of his day did."

“ We read in another place that an apostle baptized the jailor and his household in the dwelling connected with the prison. The place where the ordinance is administered does not appear important: Christ does not require us to go into the prison, nor into the water, but simply to be baptized with water, in the name of the three divine persons. Is not this all that he requires of you ?”

“ I see it ! I see it ! it is the ordinance alone that I am required to receive. I must be baptized, but where, or under what particular circumstances, is not material.”

His difficulties were all removed, and he united with the church and was baptized the next Lord's day.

When men feel that they can be gratified in their peculiar notions, about those things connected with the outward ordinances of religion, which are not essential to their validity, they are much more easily convinced of their errors. I have always told my people that, though I believed our mode of baptism was more in accordance with the Holy Scriptures than any that had ever been adopted ; yet as I considered that other modes of applying the

water might constitute valid baptism, I would rather baptize by immersion or pouring, than have any weak conscience burdened by submitting to a form which he did not feel would be acceptable to Christ. The consequence has been, that those who at first thought that they must be immersed, when they found I would immerse them, if their conscience required it; have been easy to convince that it was not necessary. In receiving more than two thousand into the church, I have never been required to deviate from my usual method in the administration of the ordinance.

It is the sectarianism that prevails in the world, which prevents Christians from seeing eye to eye. When men feel that they must maintain all their little peculiarities, or their denomination will suffer, they will not be easily induced to give them up; but when they can come together as brethren of the same family, and walk together in love, they have nothing to prevent them from seeking after the truth. They do not then feel like men who are pledged to defend any little denominational peculiarity, but like honest and humble enquirers after the will of their Heavenly

Father. Christians are all agreed while they keep within the range of what the Bible clearly teaches ; but when they build theories upon the construction of isolated and doubtful passages, or upon their own interpretation of some little word, which may be differently interpreted, or upon the traditions of the Fathers, then they come in conflict with each other, and exclude each other from Christian fellowship. I do not believe that there is a single peculiarity of one of the five evangelical denominations, that is clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures. Let each strike out of their creeds everything that is not so taught, and there would be but one denomination. The Bible clearly requires us to be baptized with water in the name of the three divine persons. In this we are all agreed ; but because the Bible does not require us to be sprinkled, or dipped, or to have the water poured upon us, or to be marked with the sign of the Cross ; we differ in our judgment as to the manner in which it should be applied. The Baptists believe that because the primary classical meaning of the Greek word which we *Anglicise* baptism, is to immerse ; and because

Christ was baptized in Jordan, and Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, we should be immersed. The other evangelical denominations believe, that as the Greek word is used by classical authors for other applications of water besides immersion, and as it is used in the New Testament for the partial application of water, and as it cannot be certainly proved that it is ever used there for immersion, and as it is said that the effusion of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood, agree with the application of the water, sprinkling is the most appropriate mode. Why can we not in this case agree that each may have the water applied in the manner which he deems most Scriptural, without being separated into different denominations? Surely the sin of schism is a greater evil than to have brethren walk together in love who differ a little in non-essential matters.



## THE WOMAN WHO COULD NOT SUBMIT TO CHRIST.

I found one evening in my meeting of inquiry, a young lady who had been there often before, but seemed to make no progress in religion.

I said to her, "You have been here several times, have been conversed with and prayed for often, and what progress have you made?"

"O, sir! I have made no progress at all. I have tried to be a Christian; I have done all that I can."

"And what have you done?"

"I have read the Bible, and tried to pray, but my feelings are all wrong, and I know not what to do more than I have."

"I told you when I conversed with you last, that you must go to Christ, just as you was, and give yourself up to him, to be his for time and eternity."

"I have tried often since that time, to submit to Christ. I have gone to him, knelt down and told him I would be his, but when I arose from my knees I felt no better."

“And so when you felt no better, you gave up your professed submission, and tried to do something else.”

“Yes, I thought if Christ would accept of me, I should feel differently, and when I did not, I concluded I had not truly submitted myself into his hands.”

“Your conclusion was right; you did not submit yourself to Christ at all. You told him you would submit, but the condition in your own mind was, that he should fill you with joy and peace; and you think now, that if he had complied with your condition, you would have adhered to your promise; but as he did not see fit to do this, you do not feel that you are his, but are seeking in other ways for comfort.”

“But did you not tell me that if I would submit myself to Christ, and take his yoke upon me, I should find rest to my soul?”

“Yes, but I did not tell you that if you made rest the condition of your submission, you would find it. The truth is, that a conditional submission is no submission, but an offer to compromise with Christ. You promised to be his, but your meaning was, if he would

make you happy you would be his. You want the joy and peace of submission before you submit."

"How shall I know when I have submitted to Christ, if I do not feel differently from what I did before?"

"You will feel differently, but while you make a change of feeling a condition, you require the Saviour to come to your terms, instead of your coming to his."

"I do not exactly comprehend you."

"I will endeavor to be more plain. Jesus Christ says, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, who am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest to your soul.' Now what is the condition of the blessing promised in this text?"

"Taking Christ's yoke upon us and learning of him."

"Well, suppose you should say to Christ, Lord, if thou wilt give me rest for my soul, then I will take thy yoke upon me and learn of thee; would that be complying with his condition?"

"No, certainly not. But I told the Lord I would submit."

"But he saw that in your heart you made the peace of your soul the condition of such submission. You did not mean to submit yourself unconditionally into his hands, but said you would submit, to see if you would feel better. This is trifling with your Saviour instead of complying with his gracious offer."

"I see where my mistake has been. O how deceitful my heart is ! It is indeed desperately wicked !"

"You are engaged in a controversy with God. He is offering to forgive you and to receive you into his family as a child, if you will give up this controversy on your part ; but He will listen to no conditions ; you must come to him as a poor, lost sinner, and submit yourself to him ; not to be made happy, but to be dealt with according to his righteous will."

"I feel that this is right, and think it is the purpose of my heart to give up all into his hands."

We knelt at the Throne of Grace, and when we arose from prayer her mind was peaceful and happy.

Awakened sinners often deceive themselves.

They suppose they are willing to comply with the requirements of the gospel; but they are like soldiers in a fort, who are offering to surrender upon certain conditions, but are not ready to yield unconditionally to their captors. They want hope before they submit; but a true hope is the fruit of submission to Christ, and confidence in his promises. They want Christ to fulfill his promise, before they will comply with the condition upon which that promise is made.

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#### THE MAN WHO RIDICULED PRAYER.

IN a congregation with which the writer was intimately acquainted, the pastor, at the commencement of the winter amusements, preached a sermon against dancing. Though he was a man of great prudence, and treated the subject with great kindness and delicacy, yet a young physician, who was a prominent leader in the dissipations of the place, was greatly offended, and swore that he would

dance every night that week, to show his pastor that the young people were not to be influenced by his officious meddling with their concerns. In accordance with this resolution he got his young associates together, and after kneeling down and offering *a mock prayer*, to ridicule his minister, he induced them to make arrangements to spend every night of that week in the ball-room. On Monday evening, the young people assembled to commence their week's dissipation, in accordance with the arrangements which had been made. Some time in the evening the doctor was sent for, to visit a sick man who lived a few miles out of the village. Though the night was extremely cold, he started on horseback, with his silk stockings and his dancing slippers on, to go and see his patient. Though he had no appearance of being intoxicated, and was perfectly acquainted with the road, yet he missed his way, and after wandering round in an untravelled path, where the snow was deep, for some time, he was thrown from his horse, and the next morning was found near the road which he had left, crawling upon his hands and knees in the snow. He was taken home



and medical assistance immediately called in ; but his lower limbs were so badly frozen, that, after great suffering, he was obliged to have them amputated just below the knee-joints. He ultimately recovered his general health, but was obliged to walk on his knees the rest of his life. When he saw that he must be reduced to this sad necessity, he remarked to some friends that he had never bowed the knee to God or man, but he should now have to humble himself in the sight of both.

I have seen him often since his recovery, going about the village in this painful posture, and could not avoid feeling that he had been left to eat of the fruit of his own doings, and was a sad monument of the impotency of man, when he sets himself against the Almighty. From the day he resolved to dance six nights in succession, to grieve his pious minister for kindly warning the youth of his charge, of the dissipating tendencies of that amusement, he was forever unable to step to the sound of the viol ; and from the day on which he had impiously knelt to ridicule the prayer of his godly pastor, he had been doomed to go upon his bended knees to the close of his life.

I would never rashly interpret the providences of God, but I love to study them ; and when they speak as plain a language as they did in this case, I feel that we should be belying the Lord, to say "That it was not He." His providences, like his word, are designed for our instruction and admonition, and when we see him rebuking presumptuous sins, by signally punishing them in this world, others should take warning that they fall not under the same condemnation. It is a fearful thing to disregard the monitions of those whom God has set to watch for our souls, and give us warning from him ; but when, in addition to this sin, we maliciously insult the Lord's messenger, and deride the very prayers which he is daily offering up for us, we ought to expect a severer punishment than that which falls upon ordinary transgressors.

## THE INFLUENCE OF LITTLE CHILDREN UPON THEIR PARENTS.

IN preaching one evening in the city of Rochester, from Ezekiel xiv. 14—"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord,"—I endeavored to show, that the prayers of good men, when combined with Christian effort, are efficacious, by making it consistent for God to have mercy upon sinners—that the longer men sinned, and the more aggravated their transgressions were, the more prayer and the more Christian effort would be necessary, to render it consistent for God to have mercy upon them, and that they might go to such lengths in wickedness, that all the prayers and the Christian efforts of the most devoted servants of Christ would be unavailing.

In applying these truths to the different classes of hearers, I remarked :

*First*, That while the text rolled a great weight of responsibility upon every child of

God, it gave great encouragement to Christians. If the prayer and the corresponding effort, of God's people were necessary, to render it consistent for the Almighty to bear with sinners, and continue to strive with them by his Spirit; and if the more hardened sinners became, and the longer they abused the grace of God, the more prayer and the more effort would be needed, to make it consistent for God to save; then no individual Christian could know, but his prayers and his personal efforts, are all that is needed to render it consistent for God to save any particular sinner, or to pour out his Spirit and revive his work, in any particular place or nation, or through the world.

*Second*, That if these things were so, the condition of the impenitent sinner was fearfully perilous, and his conduct in rejecting the offers of mercy, and grieving the Holy Spirit, was reckless in the extreme. Every day made more prayer and more Christian effort necessary to his salvation, and the time might speedily come, when Noah, Daniel, and Job, if they were on earth, could not by all that

they could do, render it consistent for God to bear longer with him.

At the close of my discourse, by the request of the pastor, I gave notice that if there were any impenitent persons in the congregation, who wished to converse with us on the subject of their own salvation, and to be made the special subjects of prayer, they might, after the benediction, occupy the seats next to the desk.

A pious little girl, who had a very hardened father in the gallery, took encouragement from the discourse, to go in search of her parent, and while her heart was lifted up to God for his salvation, she threw her arms around his neck, and with streaming eyes, and a voice almost choked with sobs, entreated him to go down and ask Christians to pray for his dying soul. The hardened sinner was overcome, and in compliance with the entreaties of his daughter, and under the strivings of the Holy Spirit, sent down in answer to prayer, he occupied the place pointed out for anxious and inquiring sinners, and went home that night with his child, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.



Christian reader, is it true that prayer for the salvation of sinners becomes efficacious by making it consistent for God to have mercy ?

Is it true that the prayer and the correspondent efforts of a little child may sometimes be all that are needed, to make it consistent for a holy God to save a lost sinner, or pour out his Spirit upon a congregation or a nation ? This must be so. Prayer does not change the feelings of the Almighty towards ungodly men, but merely renders it consistent for him to do what his benevolent heart always disposed him to, to have mercy upon dying men. The tears of the Lamb of God, when he wept over Jerusalem, prove incontestibly that he does not need our prayers to move him ; but that his feelings are constantly flowing out in pity to our ruined race, and he will save to the uttermost, where it is consistent with the holiness of his character, and the interests of his moral empire. He is always disposed to build up Zion, and to save sinful men, but he must be sought unto by his children, to make it consistent for him to do it for them. He heard the prayers of Job for his three friends, he pardoned Israel often, in answer to the prayer of Moses, and



ten righteous men would have saved Sodom from destruction. When Zion travails she shall bring forth, because the prayers of his people remove obstacles out of the way of his showing mercy. How crushing then is our responsibility! and how great is our encouragement. The conversion of a sinner, the reformation of a congregation, or even the salvation of a nation, may depend upon the prayer and the efforts of the weakest of Christ's people. We should never cease to do what we can for the impenitent around us, for our country, and the world. And we should never despair of the salvation of either while we have breath to pray. When we go to the throne of grace to pray for our impenitent friends, or for our congregation, or for our country, or the world, we should remember that there are other hearts beating in unison with ours, and other voices ascending up to heaven with the same petitions; and that it may be that the scales are on the balance, and that our humble prayer will "Move the arm that moves the world."

But while these things are true of Christian responsibility, and of Christian encouragement, what is the condition of the sinner, who is

trampling under his feet the Son of God, accounting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of Grace! Is it true, impenitent reader, that you are constantly increasing the obstacles which have hitherto stood in the way of your salvation? Is it true that every day, more prayer and more Christian effort will be necessary, to make it consistent for the Holy Spirit to continue to strive with you? Is it true, if you go on in your present course the day is at hand, and the hour draws nigh, when the prayers of a Noah, a Daniel, and a Job, would fail to save you? Yes, this is all true. It is true you are rapidly approaching a point where the infinite mercy of your compassionate Saviour cannot reach; where you will have nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation from the presence of the Lord.

## THE SKEPTICAL PHYSICIAN.

DURING the progress of a precious revival of religion in my congregation, I was sent for early one morning to visit a skeptical physician. He had for some years been a regular attendant upon my preaching on the Sabbath, but like Gallio of old, "cared for none of these things." Though he did not profess himself an infidel, he was skeptical in regard to the things of religion, and gave himself no trouble about them. He was present, and witnessed the dreadful struggle of an awakened infidel a few days previous, and had enjoyed no quiet rest from that time. When I entered his room, I found him walking the floor, wringing his hands, and uttering loud groans, like one in all the bitterness of despair. When he saw me he exclaimed, "Oh, I am lost! I am lost!" He felt that he had sinned away his day of grace—that when Christ had called he had not regarded, and that when "fear was coming like desolation, and destruction like a

whirlwind," though he called, the Saviour would not answer him.

I told him that God was merciful, and that Christ invited sinners to come to him, and said, "He would in no wise cast them out."

"Yes, his invitations have been sounding in my ears all my life, but I have hated instruction, and my heart has despised reproof; and now I have nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation from the presence of the Lord."

"You do injustice to the tender mercy and loving kindness of your Redeemer. He tells you that though your sins be as scarlet, and like crimson, his blood can make them white as snow, and as wool. He says, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"I feel that this is what aggravates my guilt, and makes my case so hopeless. Jesus, after dying for my sins, has been all my life long waiting to be gracious, and I have been grieving his Holy Spirit, and indulging in skepticism."

"Your conduct has indeed been very wicked; but you must not add to all your other

sins that of resisting God's Spirit *now*, when He is convincing you of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. God is yet waiting to be gracious, and you ought to adore the riches of that grace, which, when you have sinned so long, and against so much light, can yet strive with you by his Holy Spirit to bring you to the Saviour."

"Do you think the Spirit is yet striving with me? and that there is yet hope for my guilty soul?"

"Certainly. If the Spirit had been withdrawn from you, and God had given you up, you would have remained stupid. If you perish it will be because you will not, *now*, come to Christ that you may have life. The Holy Ghost says, 'To-day if you will hear his voice harden not your heart.'"

"Do you suppose that that text is suited to my case, and that I may consider it as addressed to me?"

"It is addressed to all impenitent sinners, who live under the light of the gospel, and to you among the rest. It is my privilege and duty, as a minister of Christ, to offer you pardon and eternal life to-day, upon the terms of

the gospel. As though God did beseech you by me, I pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

He became more composed, and seemed deeply interested in the offer of mercy, but was exceedingly oppressed by a sense of his guilt.

After praying with him, and making such further suggestions to him as I thought his case required, I left him, feeling that he was not far from the kingdom.

In the course of the afternoon he indulged a hope in Christ, and became as happy as he had been miserable.

How soon every form of infidelity will be dispelled, when a man gets a sight of his heart. When the Holy Ghost convinces men of sin they can no longer be satisfied with refuges of lies. They feel that they must have a Saviour, or fall under the curse of the Almighty. Infidelity is a thing of the heart, resulting from the love of sin, and not from an honest, intellectual conviction. It is the fool's heart, and not the understanding, which says, "*There is no God*," and the Searcher of hearts informs us in the fourteenth Psalm, that, as a class,



those who would like to have it so are corrupt, and that there is none among them that doeth good. I have been extensively acquainted with infidelity in most of its modifications, and I have always found a death-bed, and a revival of religion, the most powerful means of dispelling it from the mind. The cause of infidelity is a depraved heart, and the only cure that can be relied on is, the operation of the Holy Spirit in purifying that polluted fountain.

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#### PARTY POLITICS INIMICAL TO RELIGIOUS FEELING.

AMONG the members of my congregation was an amiable and talented lawyer, who came among us to pursue his professional business. His wife was hopefully converted, and became a member of the church under my care, soon after they became members of my congregation; but the husband was too deeply engaged in party politics to bestow much time upon the interests of his soul. For years after he removed into our place, I labored much with

him, and oftentimes found him very tender on the subject of religion, and hoped that soon he would be a subject of renewing grace ; but as he became more prominent, as a party leader, his conscience became less tender ; and he began to find fault with the lives of professing Christians, and would sometimes mention objections, which infidels have brought against the Christian system. On one occasion, when we were alone in his library, I told him that I had noticed for some time past, that his interest on the subject of religion was declining, and that he manifested more of a disposition to cavil and find fault than formerly ; that it was evident to me that his political relations and his professional engagements, were crowding out the more important subject of a preparation for the Judgment.

He said that he was aware that his attention to his worldly business occupied most of his thoughts, and that he did not feel as much concern about his spiritual interests as he once did.

I warned him of his guilt, and told him that when men who had as much light on the subject of religion as he had, refused to receive

the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God sometimes sent them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie and perish.

From that time he was less accessible, and I had no further personal conversation with him while he remained an inhabitant of our place.

About two years after this interview, I visited him in the place where he had gone to reside, and soon found that the renewal of our acquaintance brought back to my heart my former solicitude for his salvation. After the family had retired for the night, I told him that though our intercourse with each other had been interrupted by his removal, yet my desire for his salvation was as strong as ever, and I wanted him to give immediate attention to his eternal interests.

He appeared to be affected, and told me that for the last few months he had been more anxious about himself; but the infidel objections which he once sought after, to quiet his conscience, would now come unbidden, and intrude themselves upon his mind whenever he read the Bible, or thought seriously on the subject of religion. He did not mean to entertain them, but they would be present with

him, and rendered it almost impossible to keep his mind on the subject of his salvation.

I labored affectionately with him to show him that he was eating the fruit of his own doings, and that he must breast the obstacles which he had thrown in his own way, and cast himself upon the mercy of Christ or perish.

When I parted with him I put in his hands a copy of Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity."

A few months afterwards he professed a hope in Christ, and united with the Presbyterian church. He lived for about two years after he made a public profession of religion, and gave evidence, by his life, that he was a new creature.

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE EARLY MINISTERS IN WESTERN NEW YORK HAVE HAD TO ENCOUNTER, AND THE TRUE CHARACTER OF WESTERN REVIVALS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY OUR EASTERN BRETHREN.

IN 1832 as I was travelling on a packet-boat on the Erie canal, I found myself in company with a very worthy old minister from the State of Connecticut. While we were engaged in pleasant conversation, respecting the rapid increase of Christian churches in the region through which we were passing, within a few years preceding, the old minister said with a sigh :

“It is painful to contemplate the blighting influence of those religious excitements which have passed over this region within a short period.”

“Do you mean,” said I, “those revivals which have prevailed in Western New York between 1825 and 1831 ?”

“I would not include them all, but I have supposed that the most of them were conducted in such a manner as to weaken the bands of

religious order, and introduce insubordination and confusion in the churches where they prevailed."

I said, "You must pardon me, sir, for differing with you on this subject. I have been intimately acquainted with Western New York for more than thirty years, and I am satisfied that those excitements of which you speak, were precious revivals of pure and undefiled religion, and that the churches in Western New York were never in a more healthy state than they are at this moment."

He looked at me with manifest surprise, and said, "Is it not a fact that churches are divided, and that pastors are being unsettled, and their places filled with temporary supplies?"

"There is more of this among us than we could wish, but not as much in proportion to the number of churches, as there was ten years ago. We are making as rapid progress in steady habits, and in religious order, as could reasonably be expected in our circumstances."

"I am glad if it is indeed so, but I had thought it was quite otherwise."

"Will you be good enough to tell me, how



many of your parishioners, you think, do not live where their fathers did?"

After a little reflection, he replied, "There are not many who do not occupy the places of their parents."

"How many have you who live where their grand-parents did?"

"Quite a number."

"If while you are from home the homogeneous population should be removed, and their places filled by men from the four quarters of the earth, who should be thrown promiscuously together; how long would it take to make them the harmonious, steady, and orderly people that you now have?"

"O, it would take a great while."

"Well, sir, the towns in Western New York were settled with very much such a heterogeneous population as I have proposed to put into your parish. My own congregation was made up, when I came among them, of men from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, New York, and a few from different New England States. Now is it wonderful that there should be occasional disputes, and that the pastoral office should have less

permanency attached to it, in such a population, than in the land of steady habits?"

"I confess I have never thought of the subject in that light. There certainly should be a great allowance made for such a heterogeneous population."

The time had now arrived for the berths to be made, and as I left the boat early the next morning, we had no opportunity to renew our conversation, and I have not met with the good brother since, except once in a large assembly.

I have published this incident for the purpose of showing how little our eastern brethren know of the difficulties with which the pioneer ministers have had to contend, in making our western wilderness bud and blossom as it does at the present day; and for the further purpose of bearing my testimony to the permanently blessed influences of those precious outpourings of the Spirit of God, which were enjoyed in our region of country during the period alluded to in the preceding conversation; and which I am constrained to believe have been generally misrepresented by good men, who become prejudiced against some of

the agents who were used by the Almighty in the promotion of these works of grace.

It is impossible for a man who has spent his life in the land of steady habits, as New England has long been called, to form a correct idea of the moral condition of Western New York fifty years ago. When the writer came into this region in 1800, it was, with a very few exceptions, one wide-spread moral desolation. In the entire district north of the Pennsylvania line, and west of Oneida county, there were but three settled Presbyterian ministers. The residue of the country was missionary ground. This destitution of the Lord's instituted means, for restraining the corruptions of the human heart, and reforming society, produced its natural fruits. The good seed which was, at long intervals, sown by a few godly missionaries, generally fell by the way side, or where it had no depth of earth, or among thorns, and was unfruitful; while the tares which the enemy was continually sowing, falling in a more congenial soil, brought forth its hundred fold.

I spent the first twelve years, after coming into the country, in the study, and the practice

of the legal profession, in one of those thriving and beautiful villages, which ornamented the banks of the Susquehanna and the Tioga rivers, and as I was in the habit of attending the courts in the counties of Tioga, Broome, Steuben, Seneca, and Alleghany, and occasionally in Ontario and Cayuga, I had a good opportunity of knowing what the state of society was. The use of intoxicating drinks was almost as universal as the use of bread, and drunkenness was so common, that occasional intoxication brought no disgrace upon the inebriate. In the village where I resided, it was common in the fall and winter for the most respectable inhabitants to meet at each other's houses, five nights in the week, to play cards and drink hot punch. At those meetings they would usually remain together until eleven or twelve o'clock, and often till two or three in the morning.

In addition to this every-day habit of meeting to drink at each other's houses, there were frequent occasions when the men would get together without their wives, and with a very few exceptions would get what we should now call drunk. I have seen, during the time to which I have alluded, a first judge of a county,

a state senator, who was at that time one of our most distinguished lawyers, the high sheriff, his deputy, many of the leading merchants, and a justice of the peace, all so much intoxicated that they were not fit to transact business, and many of them unable to walk without staggering. Nor was the village in which I resided singular in this respect; most of the neighboring villages had fallen into habits like our own. Now these men were none of them abandoned drunkards. On the contrary, they were sober men, when about their business, and despised the street drunkard, as much as any men could do. They merely yielded to the fashion of the country, and when that fashion passed away, most of them became habitually sober men, though some died drunkards.

The first check given to these dreadful habits, was by the introduction of the stated preaching of the gospel. As ministers became settled in our large villages, intemperance, in these dreadful forms, became confined to a comparative few, who were too far gone to be reclaimed. But habitual and excessive drinking still continued to be fearfully common



through the whole country, for a long time after respectable men became ashamed of the habits to which I have alluded.

It may seem incredible to men who have always lived in well-regulated society, that such a state of things could exist among civilized people, but I speak only of the things which I have seen, and testify only to what I know to have been the state of society in what now constitutes the beautiful and orderly congregations of Central and Western New York.

And what has been the instrumentality which the Almighty has employed in bringing about this wonderful change? It was the glorious gospel of the blessed God, preached in simplicity, and with fidelity, by the gospel ministry. Such godly missionaries as Bushnell and Williston, laid the foundation of a religious reformation in Western New York, by awakening the slumbering graces of a few Christians, who were scattered up and down in the land, and organizing them into churches, which were by degrees supplied with pastors, and occasional supplies, who, by preaching the truth in love, amid reproach, and persecu-



tion, and poverty, lengthened the cords and strengthened the stakes of Zion. They went forth weeping, bearing the precious seed, but according to the promise, they were permitted to come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. In answer to the prayers of these pioneers, and of their little trembling flocks, which were offered up with much fasting, and with many tears, the Holy Spirit came down, and our congregations were blessed with revivals of religion. At first, these mercy drops were few and far between, but in 1825, they became more general and more powerful, and multitudes of new churches were constituted, and the old ones were strengthened and built up in their most holy faith.

But as Satan would have it, some of the brethren among us, from what motives I will not undertake to decide, made such representations, to some good ministers at the east, as prejudiced their minds against the men whom the Lord was employing to carry forward his work, and those churches among us which had been most favored by these outpourings, were represented as having been burnt over by unholy fire, and it was predicted that good men

would mourn for years the deleterious influence of those excitements. It was in this way that our eastern brethren, some of them, became prejudiced against what were called *western revivals*, and many became afraid of any excitement on religious subjects. It was to be expected that in those powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, when an entire congregation would be either agonizing in prayer, or trembling under a sense of the divine displeasure, some things would take place which sober piety would not approve, and which the careless looker-on might make a subject of ill-natured remarks; but as a general thing those revivals with which the writer was personally acquainted, were conducted with as much prudence, and presented as few objectionable features as could be expected, when we consider the imperfection of human instrumentality.

It is true, that there were some rash and inexperienced young men, who, like the seven sons, *Sceva*, attempted to imitate Mr. Finney, and other successful ministers, and who, as is common of imitators, getting hold of little but the faults of those whom they intended to copy,

did some mischief, but with all the faults of those men, and with all the mistakes which were made by good ministers, it is still true that the period which was most complained of, in some quarters, was the most blessed season that Western New York ever enjoyed. The men who were the subjects of those revivals were not exclusively the ignorant, the weak, and the excitable; but among them were an unusually large proportion of educated and talented men. Among the converts of those days were many who belonged to the learned professions.

The prediction which was made, that the churches would mourn over these seasons, has been so far from being fulfilled that I have never known a single church, which was a partaker of those outpourings of the Spirit, that did not pray for their return. We speak of them as of the days of the right hand of the Lord, and while we praise him for his past kindness, we ardently pray that the world at large may soon be the partaker of such seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. I should not have alluded to the prejudices which prevailed, and the things which were

written against what were called "*western revivals*," if I had not felt that they must form a chapter in the history of the Church in our land, which those who come after us will peruse with intense interest, and that the honor of religion required that every page should be examined and corrected by men who can speak of what they know, and testify to what they have seen of the good works of the Lord. That class of men are rapidly passing away, and the time is near at hand when nothing can be known of those seasons of refreshing, but what will have been handed down from father to son, except such things as may be found on the printed page. Then it would not be strange if the enemies of our holy religion should republish what some good men who lived at a distance from us, through a want of correct information, have written, to prejudice the public mind against the genuineness of those revivals, and against the means which were blessed of God to the salvation of many souls. To guard against such a state of things, I have in this volume given a brief narrative of some of the revivals with which I have been personally acquainted, and have

borne my testimony to their general character and to their fruits.

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#### DYING GRACE ON A DYING BED.

CHRISTIANS oftentimes distress themselves by indulging fears that they may dishonor Christ in the hour of death. This was the case with a lovely Christian woman belonging to my church. She was an active and exemplary Christian in all the relations of life, but was distressed with occasional fears that when the hour should come she should be afraid to die, and should in that way dishonor her Saviour. She was not so much afraid to be dead as she was afraid to die. The king of terrors was always presented to her mind in a frightful form. She seemed to enjoy daily communion with Christ, but was often borne down with a sense of her own vileness, and would then look to her death-bed with fear and trembling.

At the age of about thirty-five she was

taken suddenly ill, and about midnight it became evident that her departure was nigh at hand. I was called from my bed to visit her, and when I entered her room found her husband and children weeping around her. As soon as she saw me she extended her hand, and calling me by the endearing name of *father*, she said, "The hour that I have so long dreaded has come; my days are numbered and finished; but O, how different a place a death-bed is from what I have always apprehended. You know, my dear pastor, that I have suffered much on this account. I thought there was something terrible in death, but now that I am dying it is disarmed of all its terrors."

"Are you willing to leave your husband and your little children?"

"O, yes, I can leave them with Christ. He will take care of them."

"And have you no fears now about the safety of your soul!"

"Not one. Though I am a poor, unworthy sinner, I can trust my soul in the hands of him who died for me that I might live."

"Are you much distressed in body?"



"Not much ; my Saviour is very kind to me in not letting me suffer."

"Is Jesus present with you as he never was before ?"

"O, yes ; I can see him by faith ; this is the happiest moment of my life ; I shall soon be with him whom my soul loveth."

She then drew me close to her and gave me some messages to her children, to deliver after she was laid in the grave ; and after taking leave of her husband, and embracing her little ones, gently fell asleep.

The children, I hope, have all since her death been converted to Christ.

We have the promise of our blessed Saviour that, as our day is so shall our strength be. He has told us that when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil, because his rod and his staff will sustain us. If for us to live is Christ, to die will be gain ; and we should not distress ourselves about dying, but should trust our souls and our bodies in the hands of him who hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Dying grace will be given to the devout child of God in the dying hour.

## ABUSED BY A UNIVERSALIST.

IN the congregation where I spent the first three years of my ministry there was a very influential and popular physician who was a bitter Universalist. Though he was a man of a violent and ungoverned temper, he had so much self-respect and regard for the feelings of the community, that he treated me for some time with kindness and respect. He used generally to attend my meeting once on the Sabbath, though whenever the future punishment of the wicked was spoken of, he would manifest his feelings, by changing color from an ashy paleness to a deep red. On one Monday morning, after he had been to hear me on the Sabbath, I called on him at his house, and after the usual salutations, said to him, "Well, Doctor, how did you like our minister yesterday?" He answered, with some little embarrassment, "People say that if the doctrine of predestination is true, we all do what it was predetermined we should do, and if so, we

cannot be to blame, and a holy God will not punish us."

"You, certainly, Doctor, can see the baselessness of that objection. If God has predestinated anything he has predestinated men to be free, accountable creatures, to have the gospel preached to them, and if they will not repent and believe, to be damned."

"How can we repent and believe, if God has fore-ordained that we should be damned?"

"He has fore-ordained that we should be damned if we do not repent and believe, and his fore-ordination does not destroy our liberty but secures it, for it is a part of his eternal purpose that we should be free, and if we perish, it will be because we wilfully reject the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

"But is it not according to your doctrine that a part of the human family are made to be saved, and will be saved, and a part are made to be lost, and will be lost, let them do what they will?"

"I am surprised, my dear sir, that you

should ask that question, after hearing me preach as long as you have. God everywhere tell us in his word, that none can be saved but those who repent and believe, and that none perish but those who reject the council of God against their own souls. In the xxxiii. of Ezekiel, he says, 'He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that they should turn from their wicked ways and live; and on the ground of his own kind feelings towards them, exhorts them to turn from their evil ways, and asks them why they will die.' Now if God made the wicked on purpose to damn them, would he use such language respecting them?"

"Well, I cannot reconcile predestination and future punishment with the goodness of God."

"What if you cannot? Will you reject truths that God has clearly revealed in his Word, because you cannot see how they are consistent with each other?"

"But you say I must be born again before I can see the kingdom of God. If being born again is the condition of my salvation, and the

new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit, how am I to blame, or how can I be saved?"

"Regeneration is not the condition of your salvation, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you will believe, the word of God is pledged that you shall be saved."

"Why, then, are we told that we must be born again before we can see the kingdom of God?"

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, and sinners will not come to Jesus Christ that they might have life, until they are made willing by the Holy Ghost. You are commanded to make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit, and it is because you will not do what you have all the faculties to do, and what must be done if you are saved, that the agency of the Spirit is necessary."

"I believe that Christ died for all, and that all will be saved."

"We are clearly taught in the word of God that the blessed Saviour tasted death for every man—that he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world, but we are no where taught that all men will be saved."

“Do not you and all good men pray that all might be saved? and would you not, if you could, have all men saved? and as God is more kind and benevolent than any of us, and as he can save all, will he not save the whole human family?”

“This is a very common argument with men of your belief, but it proves rather too much. You and I, and almost all men, are afflicted to see any of our fellow beings suffer pain in this world, and we desire to relieve them, and if we could help it no man would be left to suffer pain. Now God is better than we are, and more kind and benevolent, and he can prevent pain, but does this prove that there is no pain in the world?”

“No; men suffer pain here, but we are talking about eternal pain.”

“I know that; but you can see that your argument proves that there is no pain in this world, just as clearly as it does that there will be none in the world to come.”

“Well, I believe I must give up that argument—it does prove too much.”

“Now, I want you, Doctor, candidly to tell



me whether you do believe that the Scriptures teach us that all men will be saved."

"Certainly I do. Paul says, 'as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'"

"But are you not aware that the apostle is here speaking of the death and resurrection of the body, and not of the salvation of the soul? This is the way Universalists use the Scriptures: they quote garbled passages, and passages which relate to other subjects, and not those passages where the duration of the punishment of the wicked is the subject of discussion. The whole Bible, in its doctrines, in its history, in its promises, and in its threatenings, is directly opposed to your theory, and would be a contradictory book if Universalism was true."

"It seems to me that we must assume the salvation of all, to make it a consistent book?"

"Well, let us examine it a little. You say that all men will go to heaven as soon as they die. Now, according to this theory, God was so angry with the inhabitants of the old world that he drove them all to heaven by the flood, but because Noah was not as wicked as the rest, he was not permitted to go to that

place of happiness for hundreds of years afterwards. So again, the Bible teaches us that the sin of Sodom was so great that God carried them to heaven, not in a fiery chariot, but in a storm of fire and brimstone; but Lot was a righteous man, and he was not permitted to go, and if there had been nine more righteous men there, they would have kept the Sodomites all out of heaven."

A short time afterwards his oldest daughter was converted, and he became more unamiable and restive, and meeting me one day in the street, he charged me with having destroyed the peace and harmony of his family, and robbed him of all domestic enjoyment; and forbade me ever entering his house again while I remained in the place. I told him it was not I, but his own wicked heart, and his unkind conduct that destroyed the harmony of his family, and that as to my coming to his house, as he had forbidden me, I had only to wipe off the dust from my feet as a testimony against him. He left me in a great rage, and I did not see him again for several weeks.

The next time I met him he cordially invited me to his house. He had given up his

Universalism, and was a changed man. He soon after united with the church, and was, to the day of his death, my warm and unwavering friend.

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#### THE MAN WHO EXPECTED TO BE CONVERTED.

AMONG the members of my congregation was a man of about thirty-five, who was the child of pious parents, and was blessed with a godly companion. He had been brought up in the fear of the Lord, and was very exemplary in his outward conduct; but was fond of lively company, and appeared wholly unconcerned about his spiritual condition. He knew he was not prepared to die, but felt, that he was so free from outward faults, that the Lord would not leave him to perish, but would, at some time, give him a new heart.

I labored long with him, as I had opportunity, to bring him to a sense of his lost condition, but apparently made little or no impression upon his mind. At one time I came into

his family, and setting down by his side, I said to him, "My friend, you are, so far as I have been able to discover, exemplary in your outward deportment; you are not guilty of any outward violation of the Sabbath, use no profane language, defraud no one, and injure no one. You are regular in your attendance on the services of the sanctuary, and on all the ordinary means of grace. For these things you are entitled to, and do receive, the applause of your fellow men; but with all this amiable deportment, you are a sinner in the sight of God, and your sins of omission are enough to damn you, and will do so, unless you repent. You do not pray in your family; you do not acknowledge the hand of the Lord in the numerous blessings by which you are surrounded; you do not confess Christ before men, as your Saviour, nor pretend to make it the business of your life to serve and please him." He made no reply to this appeal, but has since told me, that this was the first time he had ever felt any conviction of sin. He now began to see that there were sins of omission, as well as of commission, and that the penalty of God's law was just as severe against duties

neglected, as against any other class of sins. From this time he began to be more serious, though he kept his feelings from his pastor for a considerable time afterwards. The next conversation that I had with him, so far as I now remember, I pressed upon him again, the guilt of this class of sins, endeavored to show him his lost condition, and urged him to become a follower of Christ. I told him it was as easy then as it ever would be; that his sins were constantly accumulating, while he was grieving the Holy Spirit, and multiplying obstacles to his own salvation. He was more deeply serious than I had ever seen him, and when I urged him to submit to Christ, and put his trust in him, he felt the obligation he was under to do so, and made up his mind that he would then terminate his rebellion, by giving himself up to his Saviour, but at the moment when he was about to yield, he says, that a suggestion was made to his mind so strong that it seemed as if some one actually said to him, "NOT NOW, *another time will do as well.*" This suggestion, which was undoubtedly from Satan, threw him entirely from his purpose, and he went for days, struggling against the strivings



of the Holy Spirit. In about two weeks, if I recollect right; he bowed his neck to the yoke of the Redeemer, and has now for many years been a consistent member of the Presbyterian Church.

When we charge the impenitent with their sins, it is important that we should do it in such a manner as to carry their conscience along with us, and make them feel the truth of our words. I might have preached the general doctrine of total depravity to this man all my life, and his outward upright deportment would have served as a shield to keep off the arrows of conviction. He could plead as virtues, the crimes which he did not commit, and bless himself that he was not like other men, guilty of adultery, Sabbath breaking, profaning the name of God, and defrauding his fellow men; but when he was pointed to the sins of omission, and the duties which God required, and he had neglected, "The commandment came and sin revived and he died." It is worthy of observation that in the account the Saviour has given us of the day of judgment, the impenitent are not condemned for what they have done, but for what they have



not done. The Judge does not say, depart from me, ye cursed, because ye were profane, because ye were Sabbath breakers, or because ye were liars, or fornicators, or murderers; but because ye did not do what I had required of you. So in the threatenings of the Gospel, it is, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and "he that does not confess me before men, him will not I confess before my Father." "God looketh upon the heart," and if that is not given to Christ, whatever we may do or wherever we may go, we are in a state of "condemnation and death."

We may learn, too, from this incident, the danger of the awakened sinner, listening to any suggestions from the adversary, to put off the work of to-day to a future period. "Not now," whispered into the ear, by the adversary, when the sinner was on the point of giving all up to Christ, has ruined many souls. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you," but listen to him, and he will envelope you more and more in his serpent folds. It was by parleying with that old serpent, the devil, that our mother Eve opened the door for the destruction of the human race.

"MAN DEVISETH HIS WAYS, BUT THE LORD  
DIRECTETH HIS STEPS."

WHEN the writer was first licensed to preach the gospel, he had an invitation to become the pastor of a pleasant church in a beautiful village in Western New York. He had a beloved and respected clerical friend, who had retired from the ministry, living in the place, and made up his mind to accept the invitation. He started on horseback to visit the congregation, but on the first day's journey his horse calked himself, and became so lame that he was obliged to turn back to get another horse. This made it too late in the week for him to reach the place before the Sabbath, and he made up his mind not to start again till the next week. There was a little village twenty miles from his residence, on the edge of Pennsylvania, where there was no church, and no preaching, except that of two Universal ministers who lived in the place; and there had not been a sermon preached there by a Presbyterian or Congregational minister for more than

three years. The missionaries all shunned the place, because the population was so inveterately Universal that they would not hear them. As he had been called there, while at the bar, to try an important ejectment cause, he thought that the novelty of hearing a lawyer preach would bring the people out to hear him, and resolved to spend his unappropriated Sabbath in that place. He went accordingly, and having no expectation that he would get them out more than once, prepared himself to show them, in a single discourse, the total depravity of the human heart, the remedy which God had provided for fallen man, and the certainty of the eternal perdition of those who did not avail themselves of that provision. The congregation, as he expected, was large, and the Lord rolled the love of souls into his bosom, and he preached under the solemn impression that the eternal life or the eternal death of the great portion of that congregation might depend, under God, upon that single sermon. The people were attentive, and knowing, as he did, that the Universal ministers would soon catch away the good seed, if it did not take deep root in the heart.

he felt that everything depended on the influences of the HOLY GHOST.

In the afternoon the congregation was still more crowded and solemn, and the preacher dwelt much upon the unwillingness of sinners to come to Christ, and the necessity of their being born again.

In the evening the house was again crowded and solemn, and some were affected even to tears, and during the last singing he made up his mind to spend one more Sabbath in that wicked place.

The next Lord's day there were evident tokens of the divine presence. One young lady and a little girl of twelve years old, were indulging a hope, and a very hardened man, who had been a Universalist, was under deep conviction of sin. Though his desire was strong to go to the place to which he had been invited, he felt constrained, by the indications of providence, to decline that invitation, and continue to labor where the Lord had set him at work.

Here he continued to labor, and the Lord continued to bless his efforts for the salvation of that people, and a little church of thirty-one

members was in a few weeks gathered from among those who had been taught from their youth to believe that all men would be saved.

Though the church was too poor to think of supporting a pastor, and all who were not converted were too much opposed to the truth to render them much assistance, he continued to labor in that place for three years, partly supporting himself, and partly supported by the Hampshire and Connecticut missionary societies.

When he left that place he was directed by the providence of God to the village of Ithaca, where he has labored for more than thirty years.

How strikingly the Scripture, which I have placed at the head of this incident, was verified in this case. I had devised my way, and had laid all my plans to commence my ministry in an established congregation, where my family would be supported, and where I could have the advise and support of an old and experienced servant of Christ, and where there would be a fair prospect of permanency in the pastoral relation; but the Almighty had determined otherwise, and by an event as incon-

siderable as the calking of my horse, I was sent to commence my labors among Universalists and infidels, where it might be said, with great truth, *Satan's seat was*. The change which was thus made in the commencement of my ministerial labors has had an important influence upon the formation of my ministerial character, and has given an entirely different direction to my whole ministerial course. Surely, while "man deviseth his ways the Lord directeth his steps."



## THE AWAKENED GIRL AND THE PHEASANT.

AN intelligent young lady who lived in the suburbs of our village, and was an attendant upon my ministry, became deeply anxious about the salvation of her own soul. She saw that she was a lost sinner, and was in imminent danger of going down to hell; but could not put her trust in Christ, until she could have some manifestation of her acceptance with God. She remained in this state of mind for a long time, waiting for something upon which she might build a hope, before she exercised repentance towards God, or faith in the blood of the Redeemer. A circumstance at last arrived to favor the self-deception for which she had been seeking. A pheasant, probably pursued by a hawk, flew into her window, lit in her lap, and hid itself under the folds of her dress. The first time I called to see her after this singular event had transpired, she related all the particulars, in a way that led one to fear she was falling into the snare, which she had laid for her own soul, and

was endeavoring to build up a hope of her interest in the Saviour upon the flight of an affrighted bird. I labored to show her, that there was nothing in this singular event which could afford the least evidence of her being a Christian, and that any reliance which she might place upon it would be a delusion, which would endanger her soul. I told her that Satan might have been permitted to direct the bird into her window, and into her lap, for the very purpose of furnishing her with the ground of hope for which she had been seeking, that he might destroy her soul. I was enabled by the grace of God, to dispel this delusion, and in a short time afterwards I found her resting on Christ, and putting her trust in his promises.

At a proper time she was examined and received into the Church, and years afterwards in an interview which I had with her, mentioned with gratitude her escape from that snare.

It is very common for awakened sinners to be waiting for some evidence of their acceptance, before they put their trust in Christ. Multitudes are in this way kept from the foot

of the cross for a long time, and not a few, in this manner grieve away the Spirit of God, and destroy their own souls. The sinner can never be accepted till he repents and believes, and to be looking for an evidence of his acceptance as the ground of his faith, is as preposterous, as it would have been, for blind Bartimeus to have waited until he could see before he would go to Christ to receive his sight.

I have often thought that this is the foundation of more false hopes than any other single error that prevails in our world. It invites self-deception and throws the soul open to the devices of the adversary. In some denominations of Christians, it is common, in times of revival, for the minister to invite the awakened forward to be prayed for, and while they are kneeling and some one is praying for them, others will be asking them if they do not feel some change, and if they say they do, they are told to be encouraged, for this is an evidence that they have been regenerated, and are accepted of God. In this way they are led to hope, not because Christ has offered eternal life to all who will repent and believe,

but because they feel differently, they are not so much distressed as they were, or they have some pleasant emotion, and upon this they ground their hope. We do not object to having awakened sinners invited forward to be prayed for, or conversed with, but they should be distinctly taught not to look for evidence of acceptance before they put their trust in Christ, or to build up a hope upon the foundation of their own frames and feelings, but to accept the pardon offered to them by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to build their hope upon his promises. Nothing must be put in the place of Christ. If we should find ourselves relying on our feelings, or even on our faith, we should take the alarm and fly to the only hope which is set before us, "Christ Jesus and him crucified." Faith is like the light which makes other things visible, while it is itself unseen, and the man who should trust in his faith to save him, would act as unwisely as the man who, when he saw a strong deliverer at hand to rescue him from his danger, should trust in the light rather than in the deliverer whom the light had revealed to him.

THE GIRL WHO WAS OFFENDED AT THE MANNER IN  
WHICH SHE WAS PRAYED FOR.

A young lady of moral habits and a serious turn of mind, came one morning into a little prayer-meeting, which a few Christians used to hold at each other's houses, and requested us to pray for her that she might become a Christian. In complying with her request, I spoke of her as a lost sinner, who had all her life long been living in rebellion against God, and besought the Lord to humble her proud heart, and make her willing to give up her sins and accept of Christ, as he was offered in the Gospel. She left the meeting without my knowing what the state of her mind was, and I had no conversation with her till a long time after she had indulged a hope in Christ, when she gave me the following account of the manner that prayer had affected her.

She came to that meeting, feeling that she had always done about as well as she could, and that in asking for prayers, she was taking a very low place, and using the only remaining



means in her power to induce the Lord to give her a new heart. She expected that Christians would appreciate her position, and consider and treat her as one who was truly desirous of serving the Lord, and who had come there for the purpose of seeking him. The consequence was, that when we treated her as a rebel against God, whose proud heart kept her from submitting herself to him, she felt abused and slandered, and went away exceedingly angry with me. But though angry she was not at ease; her heart, like the troubled sea, continued to cast up mire and dirt; but there was no rest for her soul. Her mind was perpetually haunted with the recollection that a minister who had always before treated her with kindness, considered her in a state of rebellion against God, and prayed for her as a proud sinner who was unwilling to submit herself to her Saviour.

After continuing for a long time in this unamiable state of mind, she began to inquire of herself, whether her feelings towards me were not evidence of her being in reality what I had represented her—a rebel against God. What had I done? She had requested me to



pray for her, and I had complied with her request, and because I had treated her as God's enemy, she was offended. These inquiries led her to examine the Scriptures to see what the human heart was. Here she found that the carnal mind was enmity against God, and that it was the duty of ministers, as the ambassadors of Christ, to entreat sinners to be reconciled to him. If she was an impenitent sinner she had a carnal mind, and had been angry with a minister of Christ, for praying that she might become reconciled to God. This train of reflection led her to feel that she was a poor, miserable, proud sinner, and was the means, in the hand of God, of humbling her at the foot of the cross, and preparing her to put her trust in the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

She has now been for years, a professor of religion, and feels that the treatment she received at the prayer-meeting was the means of showing her to herself, and ultimately bringing her to embrace her precious Saviour.

Sinners must be brought, in some way, to see that they are God's enemies, before they will seek to be reconciled to him through the great

atonement sacrifice of his Son. It is the first step in the promised work of the Comforter, to convince the world of sin, and until this is done, men will neither be convinced of the righteousness of God in their condemnation, nor feel their need of a Saviour. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and ministers of the Gospel should endeavor to prevent sinners from feeling that anything which they do, while they continue to reject the Saviour, is lessening their guilt, or making them more acceptable in the sight of the holy God. The odiousness of their rebellion against heaven, is not in the least mitigated by the most pungent convictions of sin, or the most distressing anxiety about their exposedness to divine wrath; and instead of sympathising with them, we must show them, that all their distress and anxiety are occasioned by the enmity of their carnal minds against their Creator. If there was any merit in being convicted of sin, the damned in hell would soon atone for their transgressions, but for the sinner in this world of probation to be convicted, and yet refuse to accept of Christ, is to grieve the Holy Spirit, and thus multiply

his transgressions, under the discipline of the Almighty. The enmity of the heart against God is never more manifest than under the strivings of the Holy Spirit. The sinner then sees, and feels too, his guilt and his danger, and yet, with the offers of a free pardon for all his sins and acceptance through Christ, he will reject all the overtures of mercy, and expose himself to the wrath of God through all eternity, rather than submit himself unconditionally into the hands of the Eternal. This is the only reason that the sinner must be born again before he can see the kingdom of God.

THE INFLUENCE OF INFIDELITY UPON THE MORAL  
CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS OF MEN IN THIS  
WORLD.

IN preaching a sermon upon this subject to the young men of my congregation, I gave them a brief sketch of the life and death of the author of the "*Age of Reason*." I adverted briefly to his brilliant talents, his early prospects, his moral character in his last days, the closing period of his life, and his unenviable death, as an illustration of the blighting influence of the sentiments which he taught upon all that is lovely and of good report. A short time after the delivery of this discourse, on visiting one of the young men who heard it, I found that he had been an admirer of the "*Age of Reason*," and had adopted the sentiments of its author, but had gone home from hearing the sermon and burnt the book, and had taken up his neglected Bible to learn what he must do to be saved. In a few days he indulged a hope in Christ, and lived and died an humble follower of the blessed Saviour, rejoicing that he had been led by the

providence and grace of God, to exchange the baseless theory of an infidel philosophy for that sure word of prophecy which had been the instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit in making him wise unto salvation.

The writings of Voltaire and Tom Paine have made as many infidels as the writings of any other two men, and yet there was enough in the moral degradation of the latter, and in their agonizing and hopeless death, to have convinced any unprejudiced mind, that "Hell could not boast a fouler fiend, nor man deplore so foul a foe," as he who would shake our confidence in that Book which, alone, is able to make us wise unto salvation.

THE MAN WHO WAS HIRED TO GO TO THE  
PRAYER-MEETING.

At a time of some special interest among our people, a member of the church, who was a mechanic, had a journeyman in his shop who never went to meeting in the week time, and seldom on the Sabbath. His employer was distressed about him, and one evening endeavored to persuade him to attend the prayer-meeting. His excuse was that he could not afford to lose the time, he could earn fifty cents while he would be at meeting, and that was too much for a poor man to throw away. To overcome the influence of this hope of gain, the employer told him if he would go that evening, he would give him fifty cents for his time. The journeyman accepted the offer, and went with his employer to our little prayer-meeting. He was an Englishman, and had never attended meeting much in this country, and had, I think, never been at a prayer-meeting before in his life. He became very much interested in the meeting, and the next evening



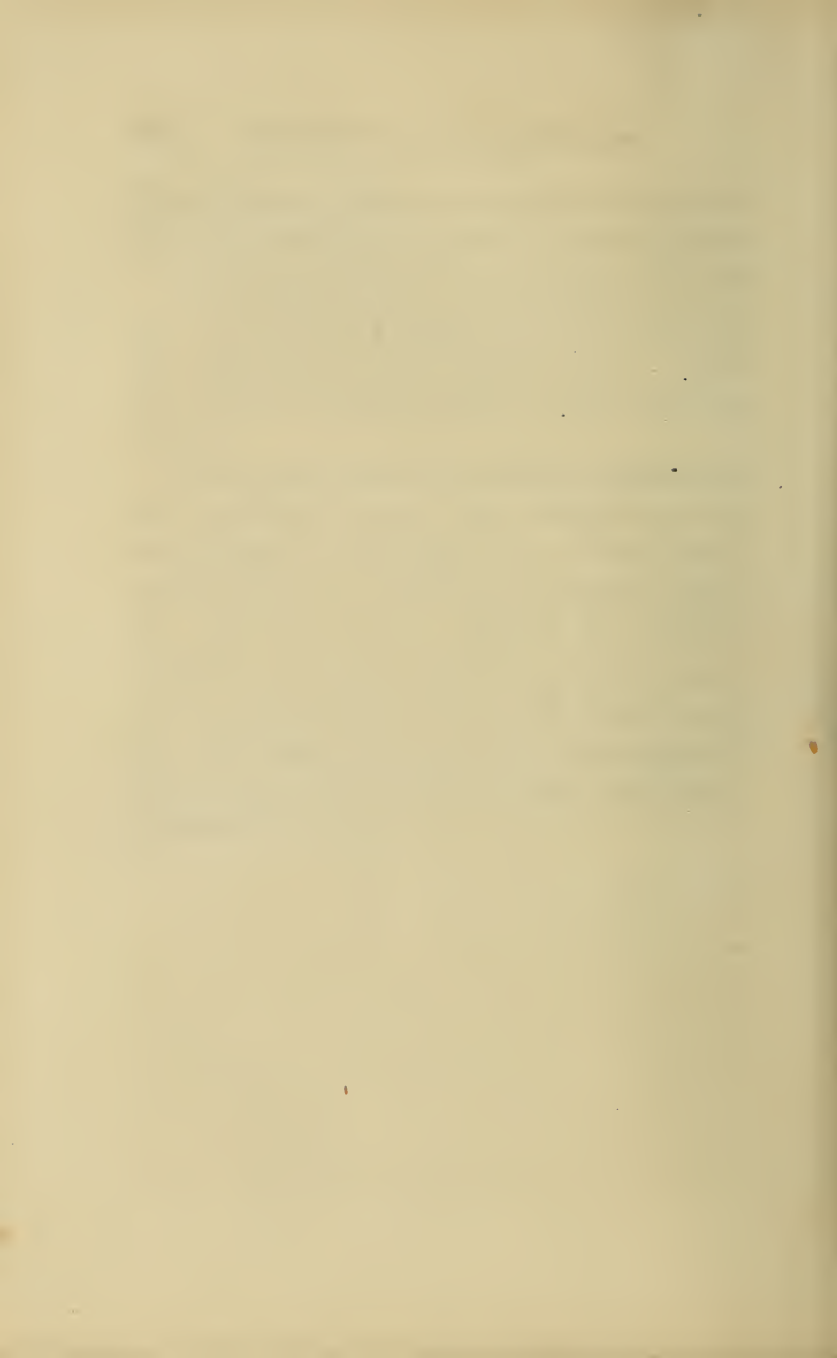
neither wanted to be paid or persuaded to attend. In the course of two or three days he became deeply interested in view of his lost and perishing condition, and attended our meeting of inquiry to know what he should do to be saved. He felt that he was the chief of sinners, and could not conceive how a holy God could ever forgive him. I referred him for encouragement to the case of Paul, who tells us that he was the chief of sinners, and yet obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly through unbelief; but when he heard this, instead of taking encouragement from it, he wept bitterly, and said that he could not plead ignorance, as Paul did, for he believed the Bible to be the Word of God, and believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and yet he had, from his childhood up, rejected him, and sinned against him with a high hand. I then told him that the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed from all sin, and if he would apply to his blessed Saviour by faith, though his soul might, by reason of its iniquities, be red like crimson, it should be made white like snow. This seemed in some measure to calm his troubled spirit, but it was several days before

he could take hold on Christ as his Redeemer, but when he did he was full of joy and peace.

As soon as he found a resting-place for his own soul, his heart began to travail in pain for the companion of his bosom, and he would give himself no rest till she too was rejoicing in hope.

He still lives, and is a consistent member of an evangelical church, and furnishes an encouragement to Christians to do all that they consistently can to bring careless sinners under the means of grace. Though the method resorted to by my brother was quite a new measure, yet God seemed to smile upon it, and that half dollar was probably the means of saving a precious soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins.











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